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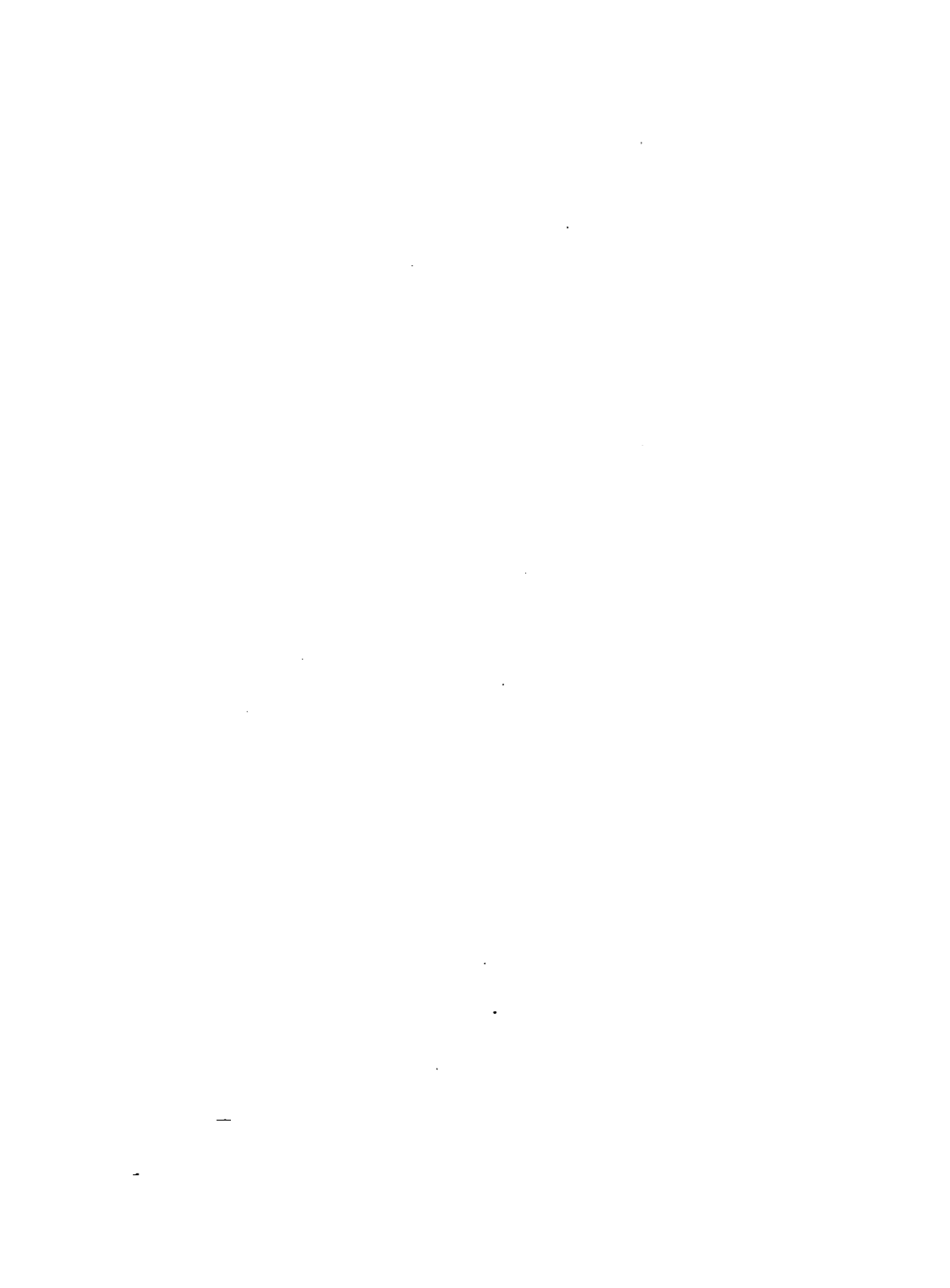
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RIENZI

*A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS*







RIENZI



# RIENZI

*A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS*

BY

FREDERICK H. A. SEYMOUR

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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NICOLA RIENZI, *Papal notary ; afterwards Tribune of Rome.*

JOHN OF VICO, *brother to Count Stephen.*

COUNT STEPHEN COLONNA, *Senator of Rome.*

GIANNI COLONNA, *son to Count Stephen.*

PIETRO COLONNA, *son to Gianni.*

STEFANELLO COLONNA, *son to Count Stephen.*

RAYMOND, *Bishop-Legate of Orvieto.*

TOMASO FORTIFIOCCA, *Secretary to the Senate, and afterwards to Rienzi.*

COUNT NICOLA ORSINI.

COUNT GUISEPPE ORSINI.

COUNT SAVELLI,

COUNT CONTI,

COUNT FRANGIPANI,

COUNT MALATESTA,

COUNT CAFFARELLI,

COUNT CORSI,

} *Roman nobles.*

COUNT CORNETO, *friend to Rienzi, and one of the delegates to Avignon.*

GIULIO LULLI, *a soldier, Rienzi's friend, betrothed to Violante.*

CERRONI, *Rienzi's chief supporter.*

MARCO GADDI, *one of the delegates, and one of Rienzi's chief partisans.*

LIPPO ROSA, *a soldier of Rienzi's party.*

TRISTAN ROBUSTI, *a soldier ; at first of Colonna's party, afterwards of Rienzi's.*

LUCA VILLANI, *one of the delegates, and of Rienzi's party.*

RINALDO, *of Rienzi's party.*

GIOVANNI, } *Roman burghers, and of Rienzi's Council.*  
BERNARDO, }

LUIGI SOLDI, } *confidential adherents of Rienzi.*  
ROSSI, }

CECCO ALESSO, *a demagogue.*

FRA GIROLAMO, *a friar of the Fraticelli.*

BERTRAND D'EUX, *Cardinal-Legate.*

COUNT GAETANO DI FONDI, } *Envoys from Avignon.*  
SCIARRA, }

BALDI, } *of the Senator's party.*  
NERI, }

PEPIN, *Count Palatine of Minorbino.*

WERNER, *captain of his forces.*

BEPPPO, } *Roman Peasants.*  
PAOLO, }

FILIPPO, } *servants of Rienzi.*  
BAPTISTA, }

FRANCESCA, *wife to Rienzi.*

VIOLANTE GABRINI, *sister to Rienzi, betrothed to Lulli.*

COUNTESS TERESA ORSINI, *mother to Martin of Puerto.*

BIANCA DI PUERTO, *wife to Puerto.*

*Citizens, Peasants, Soldiers, Guards, Standard-bearers, Guards,  
Attendants to Rienzi, and to the Cardinal-Legate, Officers, etc.*

*Scene—Rome. Date—A.D. 1347.*

# RIENZI.

## A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS.



### ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

*Enter MARCO and GIOVANNI.*

*Mar.* The green earth shows more freshly for the  
floods,  
And th' air, methinks, smells not so much of blood  
As 'twas wont to smell.

*Giov.* O, trust to Prefects  
And to Senators to cure that quickly.  
Like our physicians, one remedy  
They have for all diseases—blood-letting!  
But, Friend, what of thyself, of Avignon,  
The Deputation—wert thou not one of them?

*Mar.* In truth I was.

*Giov.* But thou didst not return  
With them?

*Mar.* No, our mission having fail'd,  
Fruitful in nothing, as thou know'st, but talk,  
And compliments, and feasts, the Delegates,  
Save Cola and myself, left Avignon.  
He, sick at heart, with brain o'ertax'd, and stung  
By sense of failure, fell into fever,  
And I to tend him stay'd.

*Giov.* They say that whilst  
Your delegates thus amongst the Frenchmen  
Sought favourable answer to their prayers,  
Clement would listen to no orator  
But Cola only?

*Mar.* 'Tis true. The Pontiff  
Listen'd to him like one entranc'd (as 'twere  
A Saul soothed by a David's strains), bade him  
On Rome and Rome's great men discourse. In truth  
Had Petrarch, who stood by, the spokesman been,  
And the well-worn tale a brand-new sonnet,  
Nor Pope nor papal courtiers could have  
Lent more mute attention. Little lack'd,  
So much the Pontiff's soul was wrought upon  
By Cola's eloquence, to have brought back  
His Holiness and Court to Rome again.

*Giov.* So, like the King Agrippa, did the Pope  
Wellnigh become a Christian! Short o' that  
He still entrusts the keeping of his Sheep  
To those most trusty shepherds, Ghibelline  
Colonna or Guelph Orsini.

*Mar.*

In faith !

Betwixt the pair, as heretofore, the Sheep  
Will be shorn. It matters not. So be it  
That his Holiness keep warm, good Clement  
Asks no questions !

*Giov.*

If this be the love

Our Roman Sheep are from their French Shepherd  
Like to get, you and all your Delegates  
To better purpose might have air'd at home  
Your eloquence ; though had your tongues each been  
A silver lute, I never thought the Pope  
Had other answer made, nor did I see  
(I do confess it) much gain accruing  
To any of our Romans, had you brought  
The Pontiff back, filling the Lateran  
With the scum of Avignon !

*Mar.*

Why, my friend,

With limp vision you would seem to see !  
Where go the revenues, that are squeez'd out  
From Roman pockets ? Do they not enrich  
The Papal crew ? The taxes that are wrung  
From our own labour should be spent in Rome,  
But filch'd from us fill alien coffers,  
Making the Frenchmen fat, the Roman thin !

*Giov.* Yet Clement being, as you say, so mov'd

By Cola's rhetoric, and his great love  
For his backsliding children quicken'd thus  
To flame, wherefore withholds his Holiness

His favour from so penitent a flock ?

*Mar.* Cardinal Colonna (son, as thou know'st,  
Of our old Senator), of much account  
In Clement's favour, was something ruffled  
By the outspoken Deputy, who styled  
His house a den of thieves, or worse, and laid  
At the threshold of his ancient stock  
All the fell crimes that undiscover'd mar  
The life and growth of our distracted state——

*Giov.* Well said, Rienzi !—

*Mar.* Denounc'd his Order  
As a pestilence ; term'd the Nobles weeds  
Smothering the myrtles and the laurels  
Of our antique Rome ! Thus the Cardinal,  
Nettled, withdrew, and withdrawing, others  
Fell off, till at length the Holy Father  
(Or that he saw danger in such utt'rance  
Or sated with much eloquence) refused  
More audience, and then the Delegates,  
Save Cola and myself, the City left.

*Giov.* How came about then that the Pope forgave ?

*Mar.* 'Twas our own Petrarch, foremost of Romans,  
As good a patriot as a poet  
(And his soul, I think, twin with Rienzi),  
Who being deeply stirr'd by burning words,  
Made intercession to such purpose,  
That the Pontiff sent again for Cola,  
And looking on him, smilingly declar'd,

“A patriot fashion’d thus that Rome were  
Well-advis’d to cherish ; he himself too  
Much on Rienzi henceforth would reckon  
To prevent the Holy See of grievance :”—  
“The Pope, too, having needs, which faithful sons  
In all climes fail not to satisfy,” he  
Bade Cola “keep upon the Treasury  
A wary eye ;”—and to this end declar’d  
Him there and then the Papal Notary.  
This done, upon us both breathed benison,  
And so full graciously dismiss’d us.

*Giov.* So ! Rienzi Notary, and three years  
Hence the Jubilee. And is Rome to thrive  
On these small grains ? In his own Lateran  
We want our Pope to live. We ask for bread  
And get a stone !

*Enter ROSA, hurriedly.*

*Rosa.* But by St. John ! I want  
No Pope nor here nor there, at least no Pope  
Like Papa Clement. I’d as lief list the  
Clank of Satan’s chains, as hear the rattle  
Of the Holy Father’s keys !

*Giov.* What ! Rosa,  
Then, i’faith, the Devil’s chain’d ! I should have  
thought  
That never yet he walked abroad so much  
As in these latter days.



*Rosa.* My friend, indeed  
You're in the right. I do believe 'twixt Rome  
And Avignon that Satan doth divide  
All leisure moments most impartially!—  
But I came not to talk about the Pope.  
Have you not heard? There's much ado to-day,  
And all our Romans, trooping forth, do set  
Their eager faces t'wards St. George's Church,—  
That in Velabrum.

*Giov.* What stir is there? More  
Of these pictur'd riddles, Rosa?

*Rosa.* Somewhat  
Of the kind, doubtless. Let us go to hear  
Whatever may be heard. Marco, wilt come?

*Mar.* Ay! let us to St. George's Church and learn  
The newest remedy for Rome's complaint.

*Giov.* So let us leave the Pope and Devil-Saints!  
Forgive us all for coupling of their names!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE II.—STEPHEN COLONNA'S *Palace.*

*Enter old COLONNA and SAVELLI in conversation.*

*Sav.* Your Excellency is too confident,  
This man becomes a peril to the State;  
The silly people follow him like sheep,  
Whither they know not, but with promises

Of richer pastures he still flatters them.

*Col.* Why, in the names of Peter and of Paul !

Where runs your noble mind, Savelli ?—

What can this tavern-keeper's son effect ?—

A mere buffoon, a dreamer of wild dreams.

It pleases me to hear this jester gibe,—

To set him on to bait some sensitive

Spirits amongst us ; his foolish sallies

E'en against myself, is entertainment.

You make too much of it. In this light fool

I cannot see a dark conspirator.—

I'faith, too, I like the fellow well ; his tongue

Is ever wagging, as you say—'tis true—

But what of that ? There's nothing dangerous

In chatter. Rather beware of silence.

The tongue that's ever on the wag is free

From venom, as the starling's, or the jay's.

His cackle hurts not, is somewhat round about

To prove that two and two make four ! But, Count,

This fellow talks right well, is deeply vers'd

In Livy, Cicero, and the others :

His eye to ferret out a buried vase,

Or antique column, is more quick than hawk's

For poultry yards. I like such lore myself.

As for his flaming Pictures and the like,—

Though I myself and others of my House

Figure therein but sorrily,—let be ;

They occupy, amuse the growling crowd,—



There's in the murmur of the People's  
Voices a threat of coming storm. Stifle  
It now ; to-morrow, maybe, all your pow'r  
Will fail to stay it !

*Col.* Well, we'll stifle it !  
Let us hence——

*As they are going, enter Attendant.*

*Att.* Your Excellency's pardon.  
The Papal Legate seeks an audience.

*Col.* Admit his Reverence. (*To SAVELLI, who is  
going*) Count Savelli,  
I need your counsel. Do not go, I pray.

*Enter RAYMOND, Bishop Legate of Orvieto, and  
Attendants. COLONNA and SAVELLI make obei-  
sance to the Legate, who returns their greeting.  
Attendants exeunt.*

*Col.* Thou art most welcome, Reverend Father,  
As thou knowest.

*Bishop Raymond.* My Son, thou'rt kind to say so,  
Fearing as I fear that my discourse may  
Largely draw upon all the forbearance  
Your Lordship hath at call.

*Col.* Not more largely  
Than from every son of Holy Church  
The Papal Legate can of right demand.  
But is there some new thing in Rome, that thus

With weighted accents your Reverence speaks ?

*Ray.* If in fresh crimes there be a novelty,  
Then is there daily somewhat new in Rome.—  
Murders on murders, unpunished ever,  
Pillage and insults in the open street.  
Men stalk their fellow-men as 'twere wild beasts ;  
Blood, showing doubly crimson in the sun,  
Awakes no horror, and the murderer  
Goes free, of no man hinder'd, unabash'd,  
Known and unshunn'd—alas ! What saith your Grace ?

*Col.* My Lord, there be lawless men, plentiful  
In Rome as elsewhere, but there be laws too,  
And worthy magistrates cloth'd with power  
To bind such rogues. Why call you not on them ?

*Ray.* “Quis custodiet custodes !” The men  
Whom you have girt with swords to guard our lives  
Brandish their weapons to our jeopardy ;  
Your soldiers are become mere brigands,  
Hirelings of every high-plac'd knave  
Whose avaricious soul or vengeful  
Bent point out a victim. Such now is Rome !  
Alas ! it is your own feuds, Colonna,  
That make the streets of Rome more perilous  
Than tigers' haunts !

*Col.* My faith ! Holy Father,  
To make thy meaning clear your Reverence  
Doth not wind about. Yet, proceed. Doubtless  
The knaves in high places—the other knaves—

Your Reverence, in thy charity did  
Speak of,—th' other precious patrons  
Of bravoos and assassins—was't not so?—  
They too have names? (*Laughing.*) Savelli might be  
one!

*Sav.* Your Excellency! No man durst say so—  
Not though he wore a mitre!

*Ray.* O my son,  
Possess thy soul in quietness. And thou,  
My son Colonna, believe the Legate,  
That nor as passion prompts to sudden  
Utt'rance nor in mere impulse, doth he speak.  
But were he silent still, the very stones  
Against God's minister shame would cry out!—  
Thou hast been long absent from the City,  
And in thy absence wickedness uncurb'd  
Hath, in a thousand horrid shapes, usurp'd  
Dominion—the anarchy of hell!

*Col.* The kindly nature of your Reverence  
Being, many years, to all men patent,  
Needs must there be (though yet shrouded from me)  
Substantial warrant for these charges.  
What is't your Reverence would desire?

*Ray.* But simple justice, Count, nor more, nor less!  
Our Romans!—They do want so little. Throw  
To them your shreds, your crumbs, your refuse, and  
Their hearts grow big with gratitude and their  
Eyes speak to you as softly as their tongues.

They're very patient, have been very  
Patient for generations past.  
They have borne yokes for centuries—Gothic,  
Vandal, Gaul, or German ; they are tame.  
You can put them in the ploughshare—nearly !  
They're very patient with their masters,  
But they have needs even as the beasts have,  
And like these, tough though they be, feel hunger,  
Thirst, and love their offspring, and do not love  
To see them die. They're very patient,—  
But they have hearts and souls, voices also,  
And the tongues of slaves will chatter sometimes—  
'Tis the only sense of theirs you cannot  
Cancel,—and, unless you nail their lips down,  
They'll murmur now and then. O, if those sounds  
Be curses, as I fear, it rests with thee,  
My son, to turn them into blessings yet !

*Col.* The Romans possess one blessing nathless,  
An advocate most eloquent,—thysself,  
My Reverend Father ! What dost thou say,  
Savelli ?

*Sav.* By the Saints ! Rienzi's self,  
The Holy Father's Notary, were dumb  
Beside his Reverence !

*Ray.* Nay, both my sons,  
I am no orator, and only speak  
But as the spirit moves, and I have liv'd  
These years past with these poor sheep and have  
watch'd

“The patient abiding of the meek,”  
And do feel their griefs are mine. Rienzi,  
Lately appointed by his Holiness,  
Labours too for them!—’Tis a sacred cause!—

*Sav.* Father, beware of crafty men that spin,  
E’en ’neath the shelter of our holy Church,  
Their spider-webs of treason!

*Col.* My Father,  
There are those who think that Cola’s chatter  
Stirs up our Romans, ever open-mouth’d  
For some new thing. ’Twere well thy sacred lips,  
In this regard, breathed warning to thy Clerk.  
The Council sits to-morrow, as thou know’st.  
Grave matters, made more weighty by delay,  
Press for solution. Thine arguments,  
Touching the state of Rome, wise counsellors  
Demand. They will not fail thee, be assur’d.  
Rienzi will your Reverence attend.  
Much would we likewise gather from his lips  
Of that which pass’d at Avignon. Meanwhile,  
My Father, I beseech your Reverence  
To let these matters rest.

*Ray.* Till to-morrow,  
Then, my Lord. May peace be with ye both, my  
Sons! [*Exit the Bishop, attended as before.*]

*Col.* What with much listening to ye both  
I’m something weary! Let’s forth, Savelli.  
The day declines. A ride to Lateran



Our brains will renovate. What say you, Count ?

*Sav.* I attend your Excellency.

*Col.*

What ho !

Without there ! (Guards *and* Servants *enter*.) Bring  
horses. Come, noble friend ! [*Exeunt omnes*.

SCENE III.—*The Church of St. George in Velabro.*

*An Inscription over the Porch*, "Soon shall the  
Romans to their good old State return."

*Enter RIENZI.*

"Soon !" "Soon !" Methinks no gambler I had been  
Had I in place of "*soon*" "*to-morrow*" writ.  
"Soon" is i' the desert still, and I, upon  
Mount Pisgah standing, daily do behold  
The Land of Promise ! Yet is the way still  
Toilsome, and this murmuring People  
Would reap abundance, having scant'ly sown.

\* \* \* \*

"Obscure !" At Avignon they laugh'd at me,  
Call'd me "obscure ;" said that "to raise up Rome,  
Her grandeur to renew, a master-hand  
Were needed. Such a work beyond the craft  
Of journeymen to compass.—Patience"  
(And still patience) "and, God willing, time  
A new Redeemer would disclose !" So spake  
All, the crowd of courtiers. (Not Petrarch—

No, not he—the pure and lofty spirit !)—  
Is't thus th' Almighty works? His Son dwelt not  
In palaces, nor in soft raiment clad.—  
“Obscure!”—God works with lowly instruments.—  
A tax-collector, or a fisherman,—  
Of such a one, the breath hath quicken'd life  
Within the wither'd veins of torpid worlds !—  
The Holy Father ! (holiness forsooth  
Of Peter Roger !) and the Holiest  
Shrank from the faithful tongue that hail'd Him  
“good,”—

Rome by such saviours to be sav'd !  
Save us such saviours ! we will work out  
Our own salvation—Holy-Fatherless !

\* \* \* \*

Lowly I am, yet not so low but that  
My feeble arm may reach unto the high  
And drag them from their seats, and I believe  
That with me is the Spirit !

*Enter ROSA, CERRONI, LUCA VILLANI, GIOVANNI,  
MARCO, CECCO ALESSO, and many of the People.*

*Cer.* Rienzi !

Hail to Rienzi ! the People's friend ! [*The people shout.*]

*Mar.* How grave thou dost look ! What is't,  
Rienzi ?

*Rien.* Grave, dost thou say, Marco ! I do not know

That there is much in life to curve the lips  
Of any man in Rome with merriment.

*Mar.* Thou, of all men, Cola, the last *thou* wert  
Thus in the minor key to pitch thy notes,  
Whose jests convulse the full-fed Councillors !

*Rien.* The laughter, Marco, of these toothless men  
Is but the swaying of a leafless branch  
In winter winds.

*Mar.* Toothless ! Then you have drawn  
Their teeth, and they are harmless ! Or maybe,  
So long have they devour'd widow's houses,  
Their teeth are broken. May Heaven vouchsafe  
No second crop to them, and all of us  
May prosper yet !

*Rien.* Prithee, a word apart ;—  
And thou, Cerroni, too.

*Cer.* At your service.

[*They retire up and converse whilst watching  
the crowd who are discussing the Inscription.*]

*Enter* FORTIFIocca, RINALDO, SOLDI, BERNARDO,  
and others.

*Rin.* 'Tis well said ! Heaven bring the prophecy  
To speedy issue ! What say'st thou, Luigi ?

*Sol.* Rinaldo, so say I. In very truth  
Rome's good old State, or any state than this,  
Wherein she perishes, were better. Though

I myself, from out these allegories  
And these prophecies, that for many months  
Upon the walls of Rome blazon themselves,  
Do pluck not out exceeding comfort.

*Rin.* Where

Thou, my Luigi, seest mere images,  
The people read—I think read truly—  
The “Mene Tekel” of the Nobles’ sway.

*Sol.* E’en as thou wilt. May Heav’n speed the hour  
That rings the knell of our Belshazzars !

*Bern.* Know’st thou whose hand, with writings such  
as this,  
Stirs the quick pulses of our people ?

*For.* O yes ! Who knows not that ? ’Tis no  
secret.

The artist works in daylight, undisguis’d—  
The Antiquary-buffoon ; sham Consul ;  
The Jester-statesman ; Pope’s Orator, and  
Notary Apostolical !

*Rin.* Good Friend,  
If thou dost know, and by such epithets  
Thou dost style a man lov’d of the Romans,  
’Twere best to speak more warily, so thou  
Regard’st sound bones as good.

*For.* Make you so much  
Of him ? Must we with bated breath discourse  
On this clay idol ? “ Lov’d of the Romans ! ”  
Have we not often heard the man at feasts

Make merriment for Senators? Go to!—  
A mere buffoon, that sated with applause  
Some other part would play. A demagogue!—  
Or a Junius Brutus junior!

[RIENZI, *who during this speech has been up the stage, now advances.*

*Rien.* I am much beholden to you, Sir, though  
In your regards not standing high, it seems!  
Your candour mitigates your enmity.  
An open foe not oft is dangerous;  
Had you kept silence I had fear'd you more!

*For.* By my troth! Cola Rienzi, thou tak'st  
Upon thee royally! Ere this I had  
Not known that thy new office reach'd thus far,  
According or withholding leave to speak!  
Yet you were well advis'd here to break off,  
Nor fool your puppets further, lest into  
Chaos, with yourself, you dash them!

*Cer.*

Canst thou

Hear more, Rienzi?

*Rien.*

My ears are open.

We may learn somewhat. Sir Secretary,  
We are patient.

*For.*

Cola Rienzi,

There is yet time. Renounce this business.  
You steal the people's hearts; find you much  
Glory in the theft? How will it vantage  
You to-morrow? Care'd he for such poor dross,

What man might not possess himself thereof?

Fluent promises! glib cajolery!

Be simple baits to snare these simple slaves.

*Rien.* Slaves! (*To the People who are pressing forward*) Nay, my friends, keep cool. I will confound

This fellow (so ye give me leave to speak).—

Ay! 'tis well for thee, well for those thou serv'st,

To mock at men whom ye in bondage keep.

Your hands have chain'd, and you do rail at them

For being bound! Then, thus I answer you.

There is in all men, e'en in the vilest,

One spark you cannot quench. Why, even your

Horses and your dogs, howsoe'er by ill

Usage from their birth you twist their kindly

Natures into crookedness, yet *their* hearts

Leap up when gentle voices speak unto

Them! And so these Romans whom you scoff at,—

Howsoe'er the dull and leaden hand of

Tyranny hath well-nigh press'd the life from

Out their souls, do know themselves possessed—ay,

Yet!—of that high temper which fired the breast

Of Scævola, and gave Horatius

Godlike vigour till his right arm became

Even as a host defying armies!

And neither Goth, nor Hun, nor Guiscard's hordes

Of Normans conjur'd up against our walls

By that malignant traitor Hildebrand—

Nay ! nor have centuries of bondage crush'd  
That sacred flame ! 'Tis yet alive. Beware  
O't, Sir, and let your masters too beware !

[*The People shout and become threatening in their  
gestures.*

*Cer.* Who rails at any man of Romans lov'd  
Makes mock of Rome, and whoso dares do that,—  
Why, Sir, there's a Rock Tarpeian still.

*Mar.* Ay !  
From the Tarpeian Rock let's hurl him forth.

[*The People cry, "To the Rock with him !"  
and advance to lay hands on FORTIFIocca.*

*For.* Hands off ! Mind yourselves !

[*Drawing his dagger.*

*Rien.* (*interposing himself*). Marco ! Cerroni !  
Romans ! What would ye ?

Is't not my cause ? My back is broad eno'.  
This matter is 'twixt him and me. To speak  
He is as free as we are. Liberty  
For all, my friends !

*Rin.* Ay, truly, Rienzi.  
Romans ! no bloodshed. Do not mar your cause.

*Mar.* Thou dost hear, Fortifiocca ? Thou art free  
To go as to remain, mindful only  
To keep quiet thy tongue, for here be none  
But friends to Cola.

*For.* My speech offends ye !  
The words that I have us'd I will maintain

Here or elsewhere. To heed them ye were wise.  
You play a game of hazard—'twill be brief.—  
—Well, as you list! I came not here to brawl,  
Nor for pastime. To all the streets of Rome  
Are passable, though ye would seem to have  
Them in fee-simple! I came, being sent  
By those who still possess the right to send,—  
To notify to all the Deputies  
Who not long since from Avignon return'd,—  
Nicola Gabrini (Rienzi call'd),  
Luca Villani, Marco Gaddi too,  
Being of the number (to me well known),  
That this day the Senate sits in Council,  
And 'tis the will and pleasure of the Count  
Colonna that those Deputies attend.

*Rien.* Thou hast deliver'd clearly. Be content.  
I shall be there. Marco Gaddi, likewise.  
Luca Villani! for thee I answer.  
Report us humble and obedient  
In all things lawful to the Senator.

*For.* Be sure I shall not in my duty fail!

[*Exit FORTIFIocca and others.*]

*Cer.* This Secretary becomes, methinks, more  
Senatorial than the Senator!

*Rien.* 'Tis a trick some secretaries affect!

*Mar.* There is a Casca, if ever Casca  
Were! Beware of him, Rienzi, when thou  
Art Cæsar!



1st *Cit.* Cæsar, say you? Ay! we need  
A Cæsar. Be thou our Cæsar, Cola! [*People cheer.*

*Cec.* How! The Cæsars loved the people not.  
Hail to Rienzi! The People's friend!

[*The People shout.*

The Champion of the Poor, the Consul  
Of the fatherless and widows! [*The People shout.*

2nd *Cit.*

Hater

Of tyranny and tyrants! "Death to them!"

*The People shout*—"Death to all tyrants!"

*Rien.* (*motions for silence*). My friends, speak lower,  
Or on the Capitol, where, labouring  
For your special weal, the Council sits,  
In that same shout some wary Councillor  
May find a treasonable flavour.

*The People laugh, and repeat*—"Death!  
To all tyrants!"

*Rien.* Why, friends, thus say I,  
"Death to all Tyrants"—in Florence, Parma,  
Or Verona—everywhere, were justice.  
But here in Rome, in Roman air—Tyrants!—  
Think ye they here could breathe, move here, live  
here?—

Tiber would rise at them and cast them forth!  
The sheeted dead would rise and fright them forth!  
And the living, the undaunted living,  
Would they not—— What would the living do? O

[*The People murmur.*

Romans ! Children of our antique City,  
Rome ! whence more oft than anywhere on earth  
To the deaf heavens hath gone up the shout  
Of Victory, or the wail of vanquish'd !  
If in our midst the Tyrant boasted still,  
What would ye do ?

*Cec.* Do, Rienzi ! what can  
The Unarmed do ?

*The People cry*— “ Give us arms, Rienzi ! ”

*Rien.* Romans ! ye are strong, and within your eyes  
I read unflinching purpose, and I see  
Broad chests around, wherein, I know, there beat  
Hearts true and steadfast as the stars. Ye're strong,  
My friends ! but there's one thing makes you feeble.

[ *The crowd rush forward.*

Pardon me, Romans ! your divisions !  
Together welded, as of old, ye're steel  
Invincible, but by discord weaken'd  
And dispersed, mere straws, playthings of the wind.

[ *The People murmur.*

Bear with me yet awhile. Arms ye demand !

[ *The People cry*, “ Arms, arms, Rienzi ! ”

'Tis well. I answer thus, Give me your hearts,  
Your undivided Roman hearts forthwith,  
And it shall rain arms upon you ! Yet stay—  
Arms ! I did forget. Wherefore need ye arms ?  
What cause ? What foe ?

*Cec.* Our Cola mocks at us.

What cause? the People's cause. What foe? why  
Th' Eternal foe, the Nobles!

*The people shout—* "The Nobles!"

*Rien.* Speak ye of them, the Nobles? O! Beware,  
My countrymen, lest of dignitaries  
Ye speak evil! Moreover, these great men,  
Upon whose heads th' accumulated weight  
Of your long-garner'd indignation  
Shall, as it seems, shortly descend, are e'en  
At this present in their Council working—  
(You must not doubt it) for your interests!

*[The People laugh.]*

Ungrateful Romans! Your Conscript Fathers  
Have but thankless children. Of this enough.—  
I and others of your friends are bidden,  
As ye have heard, the Council to attend.  
Trust, then, to us. Be not precipitate.  
The fruit will come—wait for the ripening;  
The ground is ready and the seed is sown;  
Never fear, there'll be abundant harvest.  
Leave all to us, ye can trust Rienzi!

*[The People shout.]*

My countrymen! neither be rash, nor yet  
Despond. The hour works with you; work with it!

*[Exeunt RIENZI, CERRONI, MARCO, LUCA,  
GIOVANNI, CECCO, and others.]*

SCENE IV.—*The Senate House on the Capitol.* Nobles  
and Councillors. FRANGIPANI, BISHOP RAYMOND,  
FORTIFIocca, NICOLA ORSINI, CAFFARELLI, SAVELLI,  
GUISEPPE ORSINI, MALATESTA. Officers and others  
in groups conversing.

*Nicola.* Know'st thou the matter, Count Frangi-  
pani,  
That doth demand our presence here to-day?  
*Frang.* Unless to satisfy the Senate, Count,  
That in the deluge which hath well-nigh swept  
Into the Tiber our Rome's Seven Hills  
No noble Councillor hath been drown'd! I  
Know not special reason that we lay  
Our wise heads collectively together.

*Ray.* 'Tis of good omen, Lords, that on this hill  
Our ark the Roman Senate rests again.  
And I would that the olive-branch of peace  
Some dove had brought!

*Nic.* Peace! Reverend Legate!  
Peace! Were the world as full of doves as 'tis  
Of serpents, they would fall foul of cooing.  
The Millennium's yet to come!

[*Trumpets sound.* The Bishop, Nobles, and  
others fall back.]

*Enter* STEPHEN COLONNA, GIOVANNI *and* PIETRO  
COLONNA, *attended by* Guards *and* Servants.

*Ste.* Greeting  
To ye all Thy blessing, holy Legate.  
[*The Bishop gives his benediction.*

Count Frangipani, how doth your lordship?  
Count Orsini, welcome. Malatesta,  
'Tis long since I have grasp'd your hand. Thou too,  
Caffarelli! (*They shake hands.*) Be ye seated, Nobles.  
[*All take their seats.*

I have thought meet, excellent Councillors,  
That ye should know (though doubtless much ere this  
Hath reach'd your ears) how slight hath been th'  
issue

Of our last attempt to win back to Rome,  
Widow'd so long, the Holy Father.  
The reasons, such as they be, that do force  
His Holiness still to deny himself,  
Are at length set forth on ample parchments,  
Where, in a haze of courteous words, needs  
Not spy-glasses to discern unswerving  
Purpose still to rule Rome from Avignon.

*Sav.* For other answer no men look'd, yet 'tis  
Strange this hate to Rome!

*Caff.* Noble Senator!—  
The Deputies to his Holiness, they  
Gather'd not from outward sign or token

(Some further pledge or guarantee being  
Given—tribute more large, belike) the Pope  
Would see his way to cede this question?

*Col.* Excellent Count! not more immovable  
The Rock whereon the Holy Church is built  
Than Clement's purpose. For the rest the Pope  
Most kindly us'd our Deputies. Yourselves  
Shall hear from their own lips. (*To an Officer*) Do  
they attend?

*Fort.* They await your Excellency's pleasure.

[*FORTIFIOLCA, at a sign from COUNT COLONNA,  
goes out and returns with the sixteen  
Deputies, CORNETO, GUALLATO, CORSI,  
VILLANI, RIENZI, MARCO, and others.*

*Col.* You're welcome, Sirs. Though on your mission  
Fortune hath not smil'd, Rome is in your debt.  
Much we have learn'd; with tidings constant though  
Unwelcome (being so adverse to our  
Hopes) your messengers fail'd not. Being here  
At last assembled, more would we glean from  
Your own lips, which imparted thus hath more  
Lively force than formal scrawls on parchment.

*Fran.* We look to gather much. Specially  
I would learn—the Senator permitting—  
The nature of the Pope's refusal. What!  
Did his Holiness in no wise shadow  
Forth some date propitious though remote,  
That finally to this long divorce 'twixt

Rome and Pope would place a limit. My Lord  
Corneto, may we be inform'd?

*Cor.* What pass'd,  
Most noble Senator and Councillors,  
In many interviews with the Pontiff,  
By your permission and that of these  
My fellow-deputies I can set forth.

*Col.* Proceed, Count of Corneto.

*Cor.* Th' Holy  
Father was most gratified—thus was the  
Burden of the Papal chant—"to find his  
Children's hearts so dutifully inclin'd;  
And, though most grave State reasons still forbid  
The rays of splendour apostolical  
To warm his children from a Roman sky"  
(Truly no nearer than from Avignon!),  
"Ye Romans must not therefore think," saith he,  
"That he withdraws from you the genial glow  
Of his peculiar favour" (what though  
A mountain chain or two do intercept  
The sunshine!) So that ye keep the Papal  
Coffers full, and do punctually your  
Tribute render, he will continue to  
Diffuse on Rome those distant rays, whereof  
The Holy Father spake indeed as though  
He pour'd upon us benediction!

*Col.* But more than this the Holy Father said?

*Cor.* Ay, Senator, a thousand things! He did

Advise that Peace and Confidence should meet  
And kiss each other. That civil strife should  
Forthwith cease, his Holiness did very  
Strongly recommend !

*Sav.* By my troth, Corsi,  
But cold comfort in those "distant rays" !—

*Ray.* Yet,  
My son, the Holy Father hath decreed  
The Jubilee three years hence——

*Sav.* O' your leave,  
My Rev'rend Legate ! Is this to warm us ?  
In these cold embers shall we find a spark ?  
Rome is half-dead—will jubilees revive her ?

*Col.* Count Savelli, thou speak'st well, and in thy  
Speech thou giv'st a voice to disappointment.  
The times, however, noble Councillors,  
Hurry us onwards. In dull retrospect  
We shall find no solace. Despondency  
Will not ease our shoulders of the burden  
That 'tis the good pleasure of the Pontiff  
We still must carry. How things in Rome from  
Bad to worse do hourly deepen, yourselves  
Bear witness ; and, to thoroughly purge the state,  
New means and sudden your sagacity,  
On the instant, must devise. Yet if pow'r  
Be a terror to the malefactor,  
Bounties it hath for faithful servitors.  
And for these Gentlemen who much have toil'd



Though Rome is poor, there should be recompense.  
Yet, beggar as she is, some thing may be  
The want of which may make to some of ye  
Bestowal grateful. Speak you, Corneto!—  
There *is* somewhat?

*Cor.*                               What should I say, my Lord?  
To success rewards are due, to failure  
None. Moreover, in these grave affairs small  
Was my part, my labours slight. Others were  
In their toil incessant; foremost of them  
Cola Rienzi!

*Several Deputies (speaking together).* Ay! 'twas  
Rienzi!

*Col.* Cola! stand forth. Thou hear'st with what  
acclaim  
Thy fellow-deputies do designate  
Thy merits, whereof too the common voice  
Doth loudly speak, nor to myself unknown.  
What though the Pope himself hath not been slow  
(Having with honourable duties late  
Girded you) to mark you out for favour,  
Yet should there be within my province, Sir,  
Likewise your own desires, guerdon or prize,  
I pray thee name it, Cola Rienzi.

*Rien.* The prodigality of your lordship  
A proverb is in Rome, yet my deserts  
Are smaller than my needs, the which being,  
As your Lordship long hath known, most scanty.

What should I ask, desiring nothing? If  
In the estimation of these my  
Fellow-countrymen I stand well, wealthy  
I am, nor covet more, yet had I a  
Thing—yet scarce a thing—to ask — [Hesitates.

Col.

Speak! name it,

Rienzi.

*Rien.* O noble Senator! no

Gift—nay, but an answer rather.

Col.

Ask, then,

Thy question. If thou dost please accept  
Answers for gifts, methinks thy services  
Entitle thee to claim them by the score!—

*Rien.* I had a brother once. Your Lordship knows  
The story—'tis a sad one, and yet worse,  
A very old one now. Still unavenged  
That brother lies. Still seems before mine eyes  
His youthful blood to bubble forth as red  
As hundreds saw it on that dreadful day,  
When in a very wantonness of sin,  
Full in the noonday glare, th' assassin struck  
With his coward steel the unarm'd stripling  
(Poor joyous boy!) dead at my feet! My Lord,  
Flaunting his brazen forehead in the sun,  
Gay and defiant of both God and man,  
The murderer still lives!

[During the above speech all have been pressing  
forward with increasing excitement.

*Col.* His name ! his name !

Tush ! so long ago—I have forgotten.—

*Rien.* Ay ! murder is a common thing in Rome.

His name—Martin of Puerto ! himself

Once Senator of Rome.

*N. Ors.* 'Tis false !

*Rien.* 'Tis true,

True as daylight, Nicola Orsini !

And thou wert by, with others of thy House,

And saw the innocent butcher'd.

*Nic.* Dar'st thou,

Insolent hound !

[Attempts to strike RIENZI. His hand is arrested by GUISEPPE ORSINI.]

*Gui.* Nicola ! stay thine hand ;

This is nor time nor place for violence.

*Col.* Restrain thyself, Orsini, on thy life !

*Rien.* Forbid him not, my Lord ; I fear him not.

*Col.* I charge ye all, forbear. What, Nobles, have

We no guards ? Is this fit place for brawling ?

Stand back, Rienzi. My Lord Orsini,

Such charge being openly brought before

Us in full council, must with strictest forms

Of justice here be examin'd. 'Tis nought

Of private feud.—Where is your kinsman, whom

Rome calls Martin of Puerto ? Speak.

*Nic.* Nay,

My Lord Colonna, I know not. The clan

Orsini is full large.

*G. Col.* Where, my lord? I'faith!  
Where should he be but, like a ravening  
Wolf, rending the weak and unprotected!

*Nico.* Thus to his face thou durst not call him  
wolf.

*Gian.* 'Twere bootless, the Orsini being bears!  
Yet take thy choice of beasts, if thou art nice  
To draw distinctions!

*Col.* Be silent, son!

*[Many of the Colonna and the Orsini draw  
their swords. COLONNA and BISHOP RAY-  
MOND hurry down the stage between the  
opposing factions.]*

*Col.* By St. John, gentlemen, what would ye do?  
Forthwith replace your fratricidal swords!  
Gianni, forbear! Thou, Count Orsini, peace!  
How! in the very Council anarchy?  
Nobles and Senators, like to merest  
Brigands quarrelling o'er some plunder, fight  
In cold blood! If ye must wrangle, are the  
Streets, the fields, for your insensate brawls too  
Narrow? Shall I the sword of office wield  
In vain? By Heavens, no! Too gentle I  
Have been. Tolerance push'd further——

*[A great disturbance without. Shouts of a mob.  
The names "Rienzi!" "Colonna!"  
"Senator!" are heard.]*

*Enter two or three Officers hurriedly.*

*Col.* How, sir?

*1st. Off.* Your Excellency's pardon.

*Col.* Thou hast it. [*The shouts increase.*]

*Speak.* What portend these cries? Is there revolt?

*Off.* My Lord, as yet there's no revolt. Tumult  
There is, clamourings, but violence none.

[*Shouts repeated.*]

*Col.* So nigh the Senate do they threaten us?

[*Ascends the stage to window.*]

*Off.* No threats, my Lord, but they have been advis'd  
By those in Rome, who make their trade to stir  
And to provoke ill blood, that in this place  
Some harm awaits their fav'rite Rienzi.

*Col.* A coil, in truth! [*Increased commotion without.*]

*Bish.* My Lord, I do advise  
Parley immediate with the leaders.

*Col.* 'Tis good. Go, some of ye, in haste and learn  
From the bell-wethers of this bleating flock  
The colour of their needs! Caffarelli,  
Lend us thine aid in this, my noble friend;  
And thou, Corneto, too.

[*Exeunt CAFFARELLI and CORNETO. During  
their absence the Nobles and Councillors  
converse in groups.*]

*Bish. (aside to RIENZI).* Didst thou know aught  
Of this disturbance?

*Rien.*                      Reverend Father,  
'Twas distant from my thought as from my wish.  
'Tis the leading of the rasher spirits  
That alarm have ta'en, fearing that this long  
Session of the Council peril did  
Portend to some they hold more closely to.  
Fear nothing. This will pass. Th' event will show  
'Tis manageable.

*Re-enter CAFFARELLI and CORNETO.*

*Col.*                      How, my Lords, what is't?  
Hath the storm yet spent itself?

*Cor.*                      'Tis yielding,  
Noble Senator. At first the cloud looked  
Angrily. But 'tis not much. Sheet lightning  
Only. The mob being faced scorch'd not. They  
Ask no more than some assurance (to their  
Own vision best convey'd) that mishap  
None threatens the man on whom of all they  
Build their heart's desires, Rienzi.

*Col.*                      So !  
Rienzi, since to rest with thee it seems  
Rather than with myself (not desiring,  
As in truth I do not, to scare away  
With show of steel this lawless multitude)  
To still the hoarseness of the public throat,  
Speak thou to them. Charm them like Orpheus !  
A miracle awaits us ! (*To Bishop*) Your pardon,

Holy Father ! Rienzi, to them quick !

[RIENZI *makes obeisance to the Senator, and  
mounts the window overlooking the Capitol.*

*He is received enthusiastically by the mob.*

*Rien.* Romans ! My fellow-citizens ! My friends !

If't be (and being in so great numbers

As ye are, 'twould warrant such belief) that

Ye do fear some peril to impend o'er

Heads of some that haply ye think good to

Cherish (*Cries of "Rienzi !"*), take from my lips  
assurance then,

That no hair of any head to Romans

Dear hath been entreated roughly. Likewise

Be sure that were these tyrants in this place,

They could not live an hour ! [*Cries of "Rienzi !"*

*Sav. (to the Nobles).* Mark ye this well !

Methinks this Notary takes much upon

Him with his mobs !

*Nic. Ors.*

My troth ! the Senator

Is tolerant.

*Sav.* The fellow speaks again !

*Rien.* The Senator whom ye do know kindly

Disposed to all of ye, thus much bade me

Say. There's no harm done. Be advis'd, my friends ;

Get ye to your homes. Authority that

For the general weal, enthronèd on

Her Ancient seat, should rule unshackled,

Hedg'd thus around beholds her work undone,

Her action paralyzed. Be tranquil !

Go ! Ye have friends here more than ye wot of.

Be ruled by me. Go home, still crying as

Ye go. (*Cries of "Rienzi !"*) Nay, not Rienzi, only  
"Rome !"

[*Shouts of "Rome !" The mob draws away.*

*The cry is taken up in the Council. The Senator, the Bishop, and the Deputies manifest joy as they gather about RIENZI. The Orsini and many of the Nobles range themselves in a group apart. The curtain falls as the shouts of the mob grow faint in the distance.*

END OF ACT I.



## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Interior of RIENZI'S house in the Forum  
Boarium. VIOLANTE GABRINI at work, GIULIO  
LULLI sitting at her feet.*

*Vio.* And so thou wouldst away to Genoa?

*Giu.* Genoa, Violante, or to Florence,  
Milan, or Pisa, or to any place,  
So it be far without the gates of Rome.

*Vio.* Wherefore, Giulio, far from Rome?

*Giu.*

Because

No cut-throat being, nor brigand, here I  
Cannot thrive; my hands unprofitable  
Do lack docility.

*Vio.*

Yet, Giulio,

Are there no murderers, then, in Milan,  
No brigands neither?

*Giu.*

Violante, doubtless.

But I have no taste for petty brawls, for  
Thievings and dull frauds, nor in the sorry  
Wranglings of our Nobles, Orsini or

Colonna, that do wear the life away  
Of our distracted Rome, can I one grain  
Pluck out to nourish my ambition !

*Vio.* What, Giulio, glory and no fighting !

*Giu.* Violante, I would both. Yet to battle  
For no ends but those of our small tyrants  
(Themselves but bandits) can no glory bring,  
Give me some cause to kindle in the soul,  
The arm to clothe with pow'r, to transfigure  
The brow, and I till the last trump would fight !—  
I will to the Great Company away,  
Where kingdoms are as dice ! Some Monferrat  
Or Werner, whose large ambition scorns  
Such poor prey as satisfies the paltry  
Souls of these our Romans !

*Vio.* What, Giulio !—

And is life not worth the living, so you  
Amid the clash and clang of arms live not ?  
In peaceful lives is there no joyfulness,  
And is an honest trade but weariness ?

*Giu.* In peace our tyrants will not have us live.  
Th' armourer's or the undertaker's trades  
Are those alone to fill men's mouths with bread !

*Vio.* Yet there be many who their lives live out  
Unmark'd of any, whom no tongue records,  
Still plodding o'er their own sad narrow fields  
From youth to age, their hearts are not aglow  
With longing to be other than they are ;

Yet they are happy !

*Giu.* Let them have such bliss !

I would not lead the life of such a drudge  
For all my hopes hereafter. Living thus—  
(If life it could be called)—rather slow death—  
The soul would beat herself to death against  
The leaden bars of dismal circumstance:  
Let the dull herd, since oxen must be yoked  
And fields be plough'd, labour and delve ; but thou  
Thyself, Violante, wouldst not have me thus.  
Nor would I, loving thee as I do love,  
Immure thee living in such Catacomb. [*They embrace.*

*Vio.* Yet would I rather, Giulio, loving  
Thee as I love, that such as this thou wert.  
O ! that thou wert some simple artisan,  
Or meek apprentice to some honest man !  
So shouldst thou haply keep thy head above  
The turmoil of deep waters.

*Giu.* Violante !

And wouldst thou mate with such a petty one?—  
Such mate not meet for Cola's sister.

*Enter RIENZI.*

*Vio.* Here

Comes my brother, apter to speak than I.

[*Retires to her work.*

*Rien.* Giulio, my friend, how goes the world, well !  
Still art athirst for glory ? Warriors

Are in Rome much needed. Why in the ranks  
Of Count Orsini dost thou not enrol  
Thyself?

*Giu.* In truth, if thou dost think, Cola,  
That brawlings in the Streets and pilferings  
Delight my soul, thou know'st Lulli little.

*Vio.* Nay, in good sooth, my brother Nicola,  
Thou know'st him not at all. Messer Lulli  
Is for larger contest!

*Rien.* That yet may come!  
And so thou think'st that on our antique tree  
There be no blossoms worth the plucking left?—  
In Pisa only or in Florence. How!

*Giu.* I know not that. But in those towns more  
blest  
Are men as brothers—are their own rulers;  
War not against each other as in Rome;  
No mailèd gripe of petty tyrants there  
Maddens their souls. There one man's wrong becomes  
The wrong of all. That is a happy state!

*Rien.* Lulli, thou art right. In this old City  
There is no cause to win the arm of youth.  
This sad old Rome, inert, indifferent,  
Supine, lies like some poor dying hound that,  
With dim fading eyes, watches but heeds not  
A fire passing into ashes!

*Vio.* Cola!  
My brother, and but seven days since 'twas

Thou that tamed'st the madness of the mob,  
And didst show to the Senate, impotent  
Themselves, thy power with the Romans ! Nay,—  
Did he not, Giulio ?

*Giu.*                                Ay, Violante,  
He did move them, e'en as a skill'd horseman  
To his will subdues the wayward spirit  
Of a fiery steed.

*Rien.*                            Know'st thou, Sister,  
Where's Francesca ?

*Vio.*                                She hears your boy repeat  
His task ere that he goes to school.

*Rien.*    Seek her,  
Violante, and tell her that I have words  
To say to Giulio here at present,  
Which being spoken I will join her straight.

*Vio.* I will to her at once. She asked for thee.—

[GIULIO busies himself in collecting VIOLANTE'S  
work, and they retire up the stage, and  
with lovers' whisperings they embrace.

*Exit VIOLANTE. GIULIO comes down.*

*Rien.* Now we are alone, Giulio, and I  
Have that to say to thee, which from my lips  
Thou would'st have learn'd, had occasion served  
And secrecy been sure. There's none in Rome—  
Thou know'st it, Giulio—that to my heart  
Lies closer than thyself, nor chiefly thus  
By reason of the love (though, indeed, much)

Thou bear'st to one as near to me in blood  
As love, but that thy life through I have seen  
From all thy actions, as from thy words,  
A steady light shine forth as from the soul,  
Wherein I could discern that all thy hopes,  
All faculties and wishes, even love,  
Waited on, kneel'd to, one only goddess—  
Liberty !

*Giu.* 'Tis most true, Cola, we are  
Knit together close by that same worship.  
But wherefore this to-day ? Hath aught happen'd ?  
Discern you in th' horizon any gleam  
Of the long-look'd-for dawn so long delay'd ?

*Rien.* Any gleam ! Ay, Giulio, many gleams.  
But patient still must we keep vigil.  
The Dawn we long for leaps not suddenly  
From centuries of darkness. Liberty  
Thus hath not her being, worketh not thus.—  
Have we not seen, as daylight falls away,  
One pale star flutter forth ? E'en as we gaze  
The feeble spark doth fade, as though it fear'd  
To shine alone in that Immensity.  
Yet, as our eyes keep watch, that trembling Star,  
Growing more bold, doth pierce the vault once more,  
And floats upon the bosom of the Night ;  
The timid ray becomes a beacon-torch,  
A guide to all the glitt'ring host of Heav'n.  
That Star is Liberty !—

*Giu.* Let me hear more.

*Rien.* The sway of Senators seeming so strong,  
Deem'd so by thee and others, is most weak.  
Through the whole fabric, from base to summit,  
A fissure runs. 'Tis trembling now ; needs but  
The fearless grip of hands like thine to thrust  
It into chaos. Stephen Colonna,  
Nothing suspecting, is at Corneto,  
With others of his race ; the chiefest Nobles  
(Though some amongst them lately look'd askance,  
Since that I in the Council did denounce  
Martin Puerto, who unchastis'd, still  
Swaggers at large) have, by nice fingering,  
Been so practis'd on that they re-echo  
Our strain and deem themselves the authors.  
Fools and self-deceivers ! They think through me,  
Whom they have pamper'd, the People still  
To drive. Let them so dream. Shortly they shall  
Awake and know their dream is o'er. At ten  
This very night, upon Mount Aventine,  
A hundred of our faithfullest spirits  
(Thou shalt soon know the names of those thus pledg'd)  
Meet to my summons, thence to launch the bolts  
Wherewith our tyrants shall be pulverized.  
Our designs mapp'd out, it is intended  
That our Hundred should to Saint Angelo  
Betake themselves, and at that holy place  
Await the Citizens, to whom this day,

By sound of trump, the summons doth go forth.  
Giulio, having learn'd how urgently  
Such enterprise from all good Citizens  
Instant service and heart's devotion  
Claim, thou'lt be one of us, and join the cause ?

*Giu.* And will I not ! Nay, even hadst thou not  
One pledge or guarantee from any man  
In Rome, myself would be the first, and if  
Alone still we would somewhat do !

*Rien.* Spoken  
Like a Roman ! Well then to-night we meet  
At ten. Mount Aventine, and the watchword  
"Regulus" ! Farewell till then.

*Giu.* Rienzi,  
Thou hast put a life into me that seems  
To lift me into the air. My Cæsar !  
[*Exeunt in opposite directions.*]

SCENE II.—*A street in Rome.*

*Enter MALATESTA and CONTI.*

*Con.* 'Tis as you say, the Senator grows old.  
The poisonous weeds of treason stretching  
Their foul growth daily in our midst, he lacks  
The strength or will to stifle ; yet he loves  
His power, though blind to see it melting.—  
In old days think you that Orsini would



Have tamely suffer'd in the Council,  
E'en in the Palace (as thyself didst mark),  
Brazen affront from demagogues, the while  
The howling rabble at the doors shouted  
Against our order? Tush! we're rul'd by mobs!

*Mal.* I know not, Conti, that 'tis yet so far.  
But 'tis true our order meets no longer  
With the old respectfulness—'tis lacking.  
In many eyes I see a steady gaze,  
A boldness half defiance, and but now,  
As I traversed the Bridge St. Angelo,  
Heads that were wont to doff their covering,  
Remained unstripp'd. I like it not at all!

*Enter a Guard, commanded by LIPPO ROSA.*

*Con.* The Guard for Trastevere.

*Mal.* Know they aught  
New, Conti, think you?

*Con.* May be so. Ask them!

*Mal.* My gallant Captain—ho! a word with thee.

[*Rosa halts the Guard, and advances.*]

*Rosa.* My Lords, your servant!

*Mal.* For Trastevere?

*Rosa.* For that same Quarter. What is your  
pleasure?

*Mal.* Captain, there's much talk of secret meetings,  
Lawless bands, seditions. Hast thou aught  
Especial heard?

*Rosa.* In Rome ye know, Lords,  
They babble freely—have nought else to do ;  
Methinks the hands being tied unlooses  
Tongues !

*Mal.* Then 'tis empty talk, unwarranted ?—

*Rosa.* Nay, *I* know not. [Going.

*Mal.* Stay, Sir, but what dost *think* ?

*Rosa.* Pardon, Count. We soldiers do not think.

We act !

*Mal.* O ! then ye are about to act ?

(*Aside to CONTI*) There *is* somewhat stirring ! (*To*

*ROSA*) Your orders, Sir !

*Rosa.* To mount the Guard at Trastevere.

*Mal.* Thou art friend to Rome ?

*Rosa.* Being a soldier,

None better.

*Mal.* But on which side, my Captain ?

*Rosa.* Sides ? I know nought of sides. Your Lord-  
ship means

Orsini or Colonna ?

*Mal.* (*aside to CONTI*). He's a fool !

He knows nothing. Then there's *nothing* stirring.

(*To ROSA*) Well, Sir, what then ? Sides, as you said ?

*Rosa.* O, Sir,

I am on either side, like the twilight.

*Mal.* Ah, a very palpable fool !

[*Exit ROSA and the Guard.*

*Enter CORNETO and LUCA VILLANI. CONTI and  
MALATESTA salute them.*

*Cor.* Is't not  
Lippo Rosa that marches with the Guard?  
*Con.* The same. Thou know'st him, noble Count?  
*Cor.* Indeed,

I know him for a jovial fellow,  
And a right good soldier too.

*Mal.* My troth!  
A right good fool! A twilight soldier!  
A fellow such as that, in days like these,  
To be commanding Guards! Why, Corneto,  
He knows nought of all that's going forward—  
Secret meetings, treasons, conspiracies,  
The common theme of ev'ry tongue. He of  
All such things knows nought—Captain of a Guard!

*Cor.* Why, Malatesta, what know'st thou?

*Mal.* O! I  
Know much. My eyes are open, my ears too!  
When all's done, and Rome blown into the air,  
Come not to me and say that I did warn  
Ye not!

*Cor.* My friend, be comforted,  
We shall not come, for Rome being confounded  
In th' elements, there'll be but little left  
Of any of us then!

*Mal.* O, thou may'st jest!

*Con.* There's little left of Rome to be blown up—  
Not worth the talking of, methinks. Let those  
Who like possess the ruins of her. Me  
It doth not irk. Rome long ago went out ;  
There's nothing but the smell left of her.

*Vil.* Count Conti, you rail at Rome as a dog  
Bays at the moon ; it dims her brightness not !

*Con.* Luca Villani, I have observed (this  
Others, too, have noted) that since you came  
Back to us, you daily mount the rostrum,  
Expounding at great length the history  
Of Rome to us, till we our hearing curse.  
Whether you have in such verbosity  
Been school'd by some fantastic orator  
Such as Rienzi, arch-conspirator——

*Cor.* Conspirator ! Craving your pardon, Count,  
He's no conspirator ! Conspiracy  
Is dark and secret, burrows like the mole,  
And shuns the daylight. Rienzi, fearless,  
Flutters his standard in the noonday sun,  
And through the throats of trumpets doth proclaim  
His treason in the open market-place !

*Con.* O ! I pray thy pardon, Count Corneto.  
A friend of thine ! How long is't that nobles  
Cleave to the greasy skirts of demagogues ?

*Cor.* E'en so, Count Conti—I heed thy scowls not—  
A friend of all good Romans and of mine.

*Con.* I grieve to hear it. Who hath bewitch'd you ?

Time was that sacrilege was sacrilege,  
And treason treason ; now, adorn'd, trick'd forth  
In the liv'lier fashions of to-day,  
Both seem to wear the guise of Liberty.

*Cor.* Of sacrilege I know nought, Count Conti,—  
Though there be those whose lips do formulate  
That screech-owl cry, whene'er the people  
Stretch forth their hands towards th' ark of freedom.

*Vil.* Ay, Count, and as for thy cries of "treason"—  
Treason to whom ? Treason to tyrants !  
What fealty, tribute, owe we to them ?  
From larks and linnets is allegiance  
Due to hawks ? Treason to kites and vultures !  
Not to break loose from their detested yoke,  
That were rank treason to our very manhood.

*Con.* Paint your devices with what hues ye  
may,  
The baldness of your knav'ry is not hid.  
Ye both are traitors !

*Cor.* Silence, Count Conti,  
And with thy sword make good thy truculence.

[*They draw their swords.* MALATESTA and  
VILLANI interfere.]

*Mal.* Hold, noblemen ! Conti ! ye shall not fight  
Here in the streets like common roysterers.

[*At this instant their proceedings are arrested by  
a long shrill trumpet-note. A Trumpeter  
enters as he blows his trumpet, with many*

*of the people moving about him. The citizens show every sign of joy and expectation.*

*Trumpeter (log.).* "In the name of the Roman Good Estate!"

Hereby all good citizens are summon'd  
To meet at dawn to-morrow at the Church  
St. Angelo Pescheria.

*[Exit the Trumpeter. A pause.*

*Mal.* 'Tis true!

Conspiracy there *is*. What say you now?

*Con.* Well (*to CORNETO*), we're interrupted now:  
but name your  
Hour, Count, and I am where you please.

*Cor.* At dawn  
To-morrow, Sir, the place, St. Angelo,  
Shall I see your lordship there?

*Con.* What! amongst  
Your varlets and your scullions? Truly  
A place for noblemen!

*Cor.* Good. Then listen!  
If thou com'st not there at dawn to-morrow,  
As surely as that dawn will break thou'rt lost!  
Not for one hour longer will your lives  
Be safe. This day is the last of bondage!  
To-morrow, be assur'd of it, will see  
The flood-gates of Liberty asunder,  
And all our order will be swept away!

The people being masters, each foe  
(And in all nobles they see enemies)  
Will be hunted to the death. Thou art warn'd.  
Come, then, to St. Angelo to-morrow,  
Or hide, or fly. Away!

[*Exeunt* CORNETO and VILLANI.]

*Con.* Dreamer! Traitor!

*Mal.* Dost thou know, Conti, that I'm full re-  
joic'd

There's something stirring? for assur'd I was  
That something brew'd, and none of ye would list.

*Con.* By St. John! now, when the Senator learns  
Of this insensate plot in Rome, not for  
All the Papal revenues would I stand  
In any of their shoes, Rienzi's or  
Corneto's!

*Mal.* Heav'n speed Colonna back! But,  
Conti, my friend, I think 'twere better that  
We went to-morrow to St. Angelo! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The Church of St. Angelo in Pescheria.*

*Dawn. A great crowd without the church. Some  
appear as having slept there. There is a strain of  
music in the church, which subsides when the curtain  
has arisen.*

*1st Cit.* He's a grand fellow, this Cola of ours.  
Did not I tell you?

*2nd Cit.* I would not for any other man in Rome have lost a day's wages thus.

*1st Cit.* Nay, man ! mind not thy wages to-day. I tell you he'll put money in all our pockets now. No more stripping and rifling for Popes and Frenchmen !

*2nd Cit.* He's Treasurer-General, I think they call it ; doth collect the Pope's money for him.

*1st Cit.* Ah, ah ! but we'll keep it here amongst us in Rome. It shan't go off to Avignon, I can tell thee that. *[They move on.]*

*3rd Cit.* This smacks of Liberty ! That's what we want, to meet together as we list, and let the Nobles know the streets are ours.

*4th Cit.* Nobles, quothee ! We can say what we choose now. I wonder if I said, "Down with the Nobles !" that there's any one would interfere ?

*3rd Cit.* Try it, old Luigi ! and I'll help thee to shout.

*[They both shout, "Down with all Nobles !" and the cry is taken up by the crowd.]*

*A Burg.* Softly, softly, friends ! I'm of your way of thinking, but we mustn't disturb our friends—Cola, and the good Bishop, and the rest of them in the church.

*A Cit.* What are they doing there so long ? Why, they have been shut up there all night !

*Burg.* Doing ? Why, what should they be doing there but praying ?



*Cit.* Bah ! I don't like so much praying at a time !  
It generally bodes mischief.

*Burg.* But they are praying for the Good Estate.  
That means you and me, us, Rome—everybody but  
the nobles !

*Cit.* Oh ! I like that kind of praying : I'll pray, too,  
that prayer. [*Sounds of a hymn.*

*Enter some of the Fraticelli. All uncover.*

[“ *Veni Creator* ” is sung by the Fraticelli.]

Veni, Creator Spiritus !  
Mentes tuorum visita ;  
Imple supernâ gratiâ,  
Quæ tu creasti pectora.  
Accende lumen sensibus ;  
Infunde amorem cordibus ;  
Infirma nostri corporis  
Virtute firmans perpeti.  
Hostem repellas longias,  
Pacemque dones protinus ;  
Ductore sic te prævio,  
Vitemus omne noxium.

[*The hymn is taken up in the church, and upon  
its ceasing the doors are thrown open.*

*A Burg.* They're coming forth now !

*A Cit.* 'Tis bravely begun. Think you that all will  
end so ?

*A Burg.* Never fear, man. Why, we have the Legate with us. He represents the Pope.

*A Cit.* But croziers are poor weapons to fight with. Now, a few bushels of tough blades——

*A Burg.* Patience, man! We'll have them presently. Silence now; they're coming!

*Enter from the church, the Bishop-Legate, RIENZI, CORNETO, VILLANI, LULLI, CERRONI, MARCO, SOLDI, BERNARDO, and others of RIENZI's party, most of them armed.\* Upon entering the Place St. Angelo, the people and Fraticelli kneel, also the Conspirators, whilst the Bishop gives the benediction.*

*Bish. (the people rising), speaking to the Fraticelli.*

'Tis at fit season that ye visit Rome,  
My sons, your penitential caverns,  
In secluded Apennine, for a space  
Forsaking, seeing that a mighty work,  
Whereon we have but now Heaven's blessing  
Fervently besought, this day discovers.

*Fra Giro.* Holy Legate! e'en to our fastnesses  
Rumours of blessed change have entrance found,  
And we, though heeding not (so far withdrawn  
From vexing clamours of your wrangling towns)

\* Rienzi does not yet assume at this stage of the proceedings a too paramount authority. The Bishop must be put forward as though possessing equal authority amongst Rienzi's adherents.



Our wandering children to the Land  
Of Promise.

[*A shout of "Arms!" and "To the Capitol!"*  
*repeated.*

*Rien.*            Yea !

My friends, arms I did promise ye, and arms  
Ye shall have this very hour.    Prepare  
To march upon the Capitol forthwith.  
There Lippo Rosa, his name known to some  
As twin with courage, hath preceded us,  
An hundred stalwart soldiers, men pick'd  
For trustiness, march with him.    Should the guard  
That hath the arsenal in charge resist,—  
For one Tristan Robusti, a man much  
Favour'd by the Senator, there commands,—  
Rosa, be sure of it, will waste no time  
In reasoning much, but will briefly show  
Convincing arguments for our service.  
The Capitol and arsenal captur'd,  
We fear no force the Senator may bring  
Against us.    Range yourselves quickly, the day  
Increases, and we grudge another hour  
To tyranny.    Reverend Legate,  
Will it please thee to set forth?    We shall find  
The Capitol in good hands.    Doubt it not.

[*Trumpets and other instruments sound. RIENZI'S*  
*partisans assist in marshalling the people,*  
*and the whole of the assembly depart,*

*headed by RIENZI and the Bishop, and preceded by Standard-bearers and Trumpeters.*  
*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE IV.—*The Capitol. Guard-house of the Arsenal.*

*Enter LIPPO ROSA, marching with a guard of one hundred men.*

*Sentinel.* Who goes there?

*Rosa.* A friend.

*Sen.* Then give the watchword!

*Rosa.* Rome!

*Sen.* 'Tis not so. Stand! Nay, you shall not pass.  
What ho! an enemy!

[*The Guard makes out under* TRISTAN.

*Tris.* Stand to your arms!

What means this arm'd array? What brought you here?

Methinks thou art Captain Lippo Rosa.

*Rosa.* Your servant, Sir. A certain need of arms,  
A pressing want, hath urged us to your door.

*Tris.* What mean you, Sir? Arms! why, from top  
to toe

Ye are accouter'd.

*Rosa.* Sir, we are beggars,  
Not for ourselves, being, as you do say,

Richly provided ; but 'tis for others—

A multitude behind us—that we plead.

*Tris.* You speak in allegories, be more blunt.

*Rosa.* Well, Sir, thus then it is, those whom we  
serve,

For instant use a ton or so of steel,—

Pikes, swords, lances, and so forth—require.

*Tris.* Those whom you serve ? I know of service  
none

But of the State. Thy warrant ?

*Rosa.* I'll warrant

'Twill be good enough, Sir. The Good Estate !

*Tris.* Are you mad, Sir ! What limbo hail you  
from ?

*Rosa.* I have no time for further parley, Sir.

*Tris. (to the Guard).* Arrest the madman and dis-  
arm them all ! *[The two guards engage.*

*Rosa (drawing his sword).* Come on, Sir, shortly  
we shall see who be

The madmen ! *[They fight.*

*[The Arsenal guard is overpowered, and as this is effected, the head of RIENZI'S procession mounts the Capitol ; his party rush forward and complete the discomfiture of the vanquished. ROSA and his Soldiers take possession of the Arsenal, and throw out arms of all kinds to the multitude, who array themselves in the spoils. RIENZI and the*

Bishop have during this time checked the fighting, and helped to assist the wounded.

*Rien.* (giving orders to Attendants). Go, some of you, succour this officer.

[*Pointing out* TRISTAN, *who has been wounded.*

I know his courage, Tristan Robusti,—

He is much thought of. Sir, take you comfort ;

There are those to tend your wounds. I do hope

They be not deep.

*Tris.* The wound that chiefly racks

Is one thy kindness cannot staunch.

*Rien.* Captain,

If thou dost mean thine honour, be assur'd

No stain rests there. Ye were outnumber'd.

[*TRISTAN is assisted out.* *Exit.*

*Rosa.* Sir,

As brave a man as e'er I cross'd swords with.

*Rien.* To hear a brave man praise the bravery  
Of another is as music. O friends !

[*Turns to the people.*

At length ! at length ! on your own Capitol,

Your own !—the ark—the altar of old Rome,

Whence all the world drew life as from the sun,

Or Cæsar's frown, as 'twere an earthquake, shook

The crouching universe. Is this the road

Where captive monarchs were in triumph led ?

Is this the Capitol ? the Forum that,

Wherein the greatest men in all the world

Greeted each other daily? Was it hence  
The earth was sway'd and millions vanquish'd?  
Here that the Cæsars play'd with kingdoms,  
And shaped the course whereon the supple world  
Should run? What Rome hath been she may  
again  
Become. With your breath she will breathe, your  
veins  
Her life-blood. Romans, ye yourselves are Rome!

*Enter hurriedly ALESSO and others.*

*Ales.* Cola Rienzi! Messengers in haste  
Come from the Senator at Corneto,  
And instant speech demand.

*Rien.* They do not lack  
Courage thus to follow up the lions  
To their lair. What say'st thou, Holy Legate?  
Does it seem good to thee to see these men?

*Bish.* Ay, Cola, so they take no hurt.

*Rien.* No harm  
Shall come nigh them. Rosa, take sufficient  
Men, and safely bring these envoys to us.

*[Exit ROSA with Soldiers.]*

*Vil.* What hopes the Senator by this?

*Rien.* Doubtless  
To scare us from our ends. I did not think  
That he would have learn'd so soon of this.



*Enter FORTIFIOCCA and NERI, guarded by ROSA and Soldiers.*

*For.* Cola Rienzi ! for it seems that you  
In this twelfth night mummary play the king——

*Vil.* Soft you, my friend, beware the brand-new  
wrath

Of new-created kings !

*Rien.* Let him say on,  
Villani. Well, Sir, let be the twelfth night.  
Come you from Colonna ?

*For.* Yes, from the Count,  
I come with this message. He bids me say  
That he hath heard of your insensate deeds ;  
Your meeting on Mount Aventine, your march  
To Pescheria, your nocturnal mock  
Of masses in St. Angelo, (whereto  
It seems by some rank magic yet to  
Be unravell'd, you have beguiled many,  
The Bishop-Legate foremost, and most strange ;)   
Instantly, then, these diabolic pranks  
Abjure ; renounce your plots, and make complete  
Confession to the Senator, who now  
Is close at hand (having in hottest haste  
Spurr'd from Corneto). Failing this, the Count  
Will with his own hand presently hurl you  
From the topmost window of his Palace !

*Rien.* Bravely deliver'd, Sir Secretary !

There be many windows of the Palace ;  
But, you see, our friends around us number many.  
Roundly, how many would you say? Fifty,—  
Sixty, to each window? That's work eno',  
Though Colonna bears his winters toughly.

*Enter BALDI.*

*Vil.* Yet another emissary, Cola.  
Second thoughts are best. I'll swear now, Cola,  
The Senator grows cool.

*Rien.* Well, Sir, report (*to BALDI*).

*Bal.* The Count halts——

*Rien.* A masterly manœuvre !

But I can tell the master whom you serve  
Of one still better if 'tis promptly done,—  
Retreat !

*Bal.* His Excellency bids me say  
(He tarries for your answer nigh the gate  
Of San Lorenzo) his ears are open.  
And if, as seems must be, you have reason  
For this convoking of the people,  
Briefly make known your lawful grievances.

*Rien.* "Grievances !" "briefly !" Dost thou think,  
Baldi,

Th' oppression and the wrongs of centuries  
To be a matter of arithmetic?  
To be scored up, presented, then expunged  
As though it had not been? Are ye all mad?

Romans ! do ye hear ? We are not dreaming !  
Grievances ! Saints of Heaven ! Grievances !  
Rome perishes, and her assassins ask  
What need hath she of air, of breath, of light——  
The executioner would know wherefore  
The victim struggles ! Wherefore, O Romans,  
Do ye so struggle ? (*The people shout.*) Grievances !  
the air

Is darken'd by them, and the sicken'd sun  
Labours through them as a dismasted ship  
Staggers through tempests. They are as many  
As wide ocean's waves, and as hailstones  
Fretting the waves, Colonna's promises.  
Kind words might a year ago have touch'd us :  
Too late to-day. Nor let Colonna think,  
Though he swear to cheapen bread, the starving  
May be bribed—skeletons are too many !  
First we want freedom, and we will have it.  
Bread may come afterward ; we'll have that too !  
Rome has been ruled by devils—that is past !  
This hour sees the limit of her woes.  
Senates and Senators she for ever  
Flings from off her here. Take back our answer !

[*Exeunt BALDI, FORTIFIocca, and NERI. The  
people cheer.*]

*Rien.* (*to the people*). Then, countrymen, in this  
I have your hearts  
Truly interpreted ?

*Cer. (when the people have ceased shouting).* Thy voice hath been,  
Rienzi, even as the trumpet-blast  
That in old days did overthrow the walls  
Of stubborn Jericho.

*Enter LULLI.*

*Lul.* News, Rienzi !  
Brief halt Colonna made, nor doubted long  
Which road to follow. Swifter than he came  
He turn'd and fled, those with him not less swift,  
To Palestrina.

*Rien.* Without one sword-thrust ?  
O Senator, for shame ! Is Rome not worth  
One stroke ? My friends, what little men, it seems,  
Our tyrants are—mere scarecrows ! Well, the birds  
Have found them out at last—we're rid of them !  
The first day of freedom—Rome is ours !  
Come, then, each one of ye ; swear to preserve  
Your new-found liberty, the " Good Estate."

[*Cries of " The Good Estate !"*]

*Rien.* Approach, my friends, and as ye place your hands  
Upon this symbol of old Rome (*pointing to the marble lion on the Capitol*), that seems  
To urge ye all to claim your heritage,  
Swear to preserve your new-found liberties  
From this time forth for evermore !

*The people shout—"We swear!"*

*Rien.* O joyous sound ! An unbound people's  
Voice ! So, then, let it to all the earth be  
Known, and let the list'ning nations hear,—  
That we, Cola Rienzi, and Raymond,  
The Bishop-Legate of Orvieto,  
Do, in the name of his Holiness the  
Pope, hold for the Holy Father Clement  
All the patrimony of Saint Peter  
From this day forth against all enemies !

*[Rienzi draws his sword and raises it above his  
head, while all the people stretch their  
hands upwards as in invocation of the aid  
of Heaven.]*

*Curtain falls.*

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A room in RIEZI's Palace.**Enter* TRISTAN ROBUSTI *and* FORTIFIocca.*Tris.* But the nobles gather round Rienzi !*For.* They rally round him e'en as a halo  
Rings the orbèd moon, shaped by her beams, and  
Yet a sulky light presaging tempest.*Tris.* Ne'er fear, man ; a hand steady and skilful  
Now holds the helm. We have been steer'd right well  
Through angry breakers ; we're in smooth waters.*For.* May be so. Yet I do marvel, Tristan,  
Thus to hear thee speak. A month ago thou  
Wert against this fellow hotter than most.  
Rebel, adventurer, upstart, traitor,—  
All epithets in the whole catalogue  
Of sinners, did lack breath to stigmatize  
The crowd of his misdeeds !*Tris.* Fortifiocca,  
I may have spoken thus as hundreds spoke.  
To-day hath elbow'd yesterday. Success

Has proved the man a prophet, and to rule  
None half so fit. His breath (one puff of it)  
Hath blown away the sway of Senators.  
'Tis dead as Nero. There's no more trace of 't  
Than of the shadows of last evening  
Upon the whiteness of those marble walls.  
Why, with all these murmurings thou thyself  
Art his servant now, receiving stipend.

*For.* Pish ! a man must live.

*Tris.* A man should not live  
Reveling one whose bounty feeds him.

*For.* O !

Rest thee content. I wear a smooth face now,  
And he trusts me. Yet mind thee of the day  
When in the Senate he so wearied us  
With lecturings and warnings, that, beyond  
All patience borne, I with open hand  
Fetch'd him a buffet, and the Senate laugh'd.  
What think you of the man (whose smitten cheek  
Scarce blush'd, it seem'd) that could affront so great  
Thus carry off, without one warding blow ?  
O, doubly I hate him for his tameness !

*Tris.* It is a blind and blunted sense of thine  
That cannot apprehend the wider sweep  
His vengeance takes. Thou'rt his hireling,  
And in his pay, like many a varlet,  
No flag-bearer walks in his procession  
More slave than thou !

*For.* Think'st thou? Well, we shall see;  
Yet my revenge against his own I'll pit.

*Tris.* It is ever thus with men like you. The  
Tribune to render blow for blow forbore,  
And when th' universal voice proclaim'd him  
Absolute, setting him o'er all our heads,  
He shed no blood, the more you thirst for his.  
Are you not shamed? But so it ever is;  
The man that saves a State or sets men free,  
Must needs be of their own pattern. You must  
By saviours of your own cut be saved,  
Or you turn and rend your benefactors.  
Yet, were you drowning, would you be so nice  
About the colour of the hand you grasp'd?

*For.* We shall not think alike, Tristan, for all  
Thy philosophy. See, Rienzi comes!

*Enter RIENZI, the BISHOP OF ORVIETO, CORNETO,  
MARCO, RINALDO, VILLANI, CERRONI, and others;  
they are preceded by Heralds, Guards, Standard-  
bearers, Officers, etc.*

*Bish.* His Holiness doth confirm thee Tribune,  
In all thy powers and thy dignities.  
He doth entrust to thy safe keeping Rome—  
(No jot of reservation made;) and hath  
In thy submission to th' Holy See'  
Full confidence (that trustfulness being,  
As thou know'st, shared to the utmost by myself).



*Rien.* My Reverend Father, such confidence  
Gives me the strength of ten, and nerves my arm,  
Feeble without it, for a task so large.  
His Holiness' decree from Avignon,  
Thus answering back the people's voice,  
Doth sanctify election. So, then,  
By his Holiness are we both declared  
Vicegerent, and by his own sacred hand  
Are, as 'twere, anointed ; yet hard with this  
Come certain tidings that at Bonn last month  
Th' Electors, by the Pope's own order, met,  
To choose for us Romans another king,  
In place of Louis excommunicate,  
And that their suffrages fell upon Charles,  
Duke of Moravia, son to King John.  
Owe we allegiance, then, to this new King ?

*Bish.* Methinks it is an empty rank. Even  
In old times the Prefect of this city  
From all dependence on the Emperor  
Was absolved. Much more, then, are our hands free,  
Drawing our power, as we do, direct  
From Avignon. Yet, though we do confess  
Ourselves tributary to none other  
But his Holiness, 'twould be courteous  
(Such act, too, blunting malevolence) if,  
By such means as may be fittest judged,  
We recognized th' Elect of Germany.

*Rien.* Thou'rt right ; such courtesy were politic.

Myself some sounding phrases of the kind  
Colourless and vague, will formulate and  
Send at leisure.

*Enter an Officer.*

*Off.* Tribune, if it please you,  
Giulio Lulli doth to see you wait.

*Rien.* What ! Giulio Lulli, my other self,  
Holds he aloof? Am I, then, grown so great,  
That in ante-chambers, shuffling their feet,  
My friends await my gracious pleasure ?  
They should know a Tribune is no Highness ;  
Why, thus it is in palaces, where coin  
Must anoint the greedy palms of lackeys  
Ere that the lackeys' masters may be seen !  
Go, call Giulio Lulli instantly. [*Exit Officer.*

*Enter GIULIO.*

What, my young General ! and armour-clad—  
Fully equipp'd from top to toe ! Rather  
In silken hose and perfumed robes array'd  
Thou should'st have been. 'Tis said that thou hast  
learn'd  
(I know not where) the ways of courtiers,  
And watch'st the glances of thy gracious lord.  
What is the prince thou serv'st ?

*Giu.* No other lord  
Have I, thou know'st it, Tribune, but thyself.

*Rien.* Nay, my brave Giulio ! the lord thou serv'st,  
And serv'st so faithfully, is Rome—that same  
Lord to whom all we are vassals.

*Giu.* I hope,  
Tribune, before I die that I may do  
Our Rome some service.

*Rien.* Ne'er fear 't, Giulio.  
But whence art thou to-day ?

*Giu.* From Velletri,  
Tribune. Thence the road to Rome, unhinder'd  
By the cut-throats and the thieves that of yore  
Infested it. The bandits that made waste  
The smiling fields, ravaging like locusts,  
Have themselves been spoil'd. Once more  
Secure the peasant reaps that which he sowed ;  
Full waggons too, from Ostia or to  
That port, pass and repass, as 'twere in Rome,  
Untouch'd by any pilfering finger.  
Not only so upon these roads ; 'tis thus  
Wherever we have journey'd. Frascati  
Is as still as Lateran ; Albano  
Daily grows rich, untroubled as its lake ;  
From Viterbo, Rosa reports to-day  
Unbroken peacefulness. He should be here.

*Rien.* Reverend Father, for all the labours  
That we twain have had, this is rich payment.  
Giulio, well done ; 'tis men such as thou,  
And Rosa too, that are the architects

Building up Rome anew, whilst we look on.

*Giu.* Tribune, not so. Thou art the architect ;  
We the workmen only.

*Rien.* Good Giulio,  
What of Violante? Thou hast not seen her?

*Gui.* Thou know'st, Tribune, we do not always  
speak  
Of that which closest lieth to the heart.

*Rien.* Well, go you now, Giulio, and speak of 't !  
Violante is within. (*Exit GIULIO.*) Tristan, my  
friend,

What of Rome last night?—The streets were peaceful?

*Tris.* The city slept, as is her happiness  
Of late, the slumber of the prosperous,  
If not the innocent. No brawling now,  
Nor vengeful steel-flash in the moonlight.  
Scarce a cat squeal'd.

*Rien.* I thank you much, Tristan ;  
Likewise the Captains of the Regions.  
All Romans should be much bounden to you,  
Seeing you do bring to them the slumber  
That is the gift of gods.

*Cer.* All do not sleep  
Alike, Tribune. There are some noble eyes  
That do vigils keep nigh until cock-crow.  
There *are* some, I know, that upon their knees  
Nightly bombard high Heaven with prayer  
(Rather for others than themselves, I ween).

Others there are whose clicking consciences  
Do hinder sleep ; these men, in forecasting  
Crimes of new pattern, find for their aching  
Memories assuagement.

*Rien.* Stay, Cerroni !

What words are these ? I know not of such men.

*Cer.* I do speak of plots and plotters, Tribune,  
That in the watches of the night ripen  
As some weeds do.

*Rien.* You know of whom you speak ?

*Cer.* Who doth know them not, Tribune ? Dost  
thou think

That in the Palaces, Frangipani,  
Colonna, Corsi, and the rest of them,  
Mischief hath not growth, for all their masters  
Lie so quiet, and masks of friendliness  
Do wear so artfully ? What converse do  
They at their heavy banquets hold, whereat  
No man save he be noble e'er finds place ?  
Deep into night their pastime jogs. The game  
They play, be assur'd of it, my Tribune,  
Is not Rome's welfare.

*Rien.* This is but guesswork.

Cerroni, by your leave—if in midnight  
Banqueting or in carouse there be guilt,  
Then are we flagrant sinners all, methinks !

*Tris.* Ay, Cerroni ! but you should have pity.  
Thou thyself hast seen the Great Ones trembling

In the presence of the Tribune. The day—  
Was it last week—perchance last month?—hath been  
When some of us did watch their eyes, and hail'd  
With herald-laugh, outrunning leagues in front,  
Their labour'd jests. Let them alone. They're dumb,  
Innocuous. What need to crush the crush'd?

*Rien.* Honest Tristan, thou'rt right, there is no need.  
Colonna and his kith and kin are tamed;  
Corneto, noble himself, doth answer  
For them all. Of this enough! I will talk,  
Cerroni, with thee further—but not now.  
Bishop! wilt thou come! For a space farewell (*to the  
others*). *[Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.—*The same.*

*Enter GIULIO LULLI and VIOLANTE.*

*Vio.* Thou hast been long away, Giulio!

*Giu.*

Not

Many days, Violante, yet by events  
Rather than by moments we do reckon.

*Vio.* Thee absent, I have found the hours heavy.  
But when with thee the moments are too swift.  
Thou hast return'd to tarry long—thou hast?

*Giu.* Here in Rome there are two voices only  
That command me. To stay or to depart  
Lies not with myself but them.

*Vio.*

Two voices—

Say'st thou? Mine not one of them, Giulio!  
For hence without one word didst thou go forth!

*Giu.* The other voice, thy brother's, did command  
Instant compliance, silence too. I knew  
Full well no swifter passage to thy heart  
Than through obedience to the Tribune.

*Vio.* Thou judg'st aright. And now thou art re-  
turn'd!

But tell me, Giulio, what of Pisa,  
Genoa, Florence—now no talk of them?  
To the Great Captain thy sword unproffer'd!  
But yesterday so poor was Rome, Pisa  
So rich! To-day what mine of wealth, hidden  
So long, makes Rome so passing precious?

*Giu.* Violante! Yea, I have found wealth. I am  
As a man that, looking for lead, finds gold,  
And straight doth that dull ore which was to him  
Ev'n as the loadstar of his life, become  
A mean thing, dim and valueless!

*Vio.* Thou, then,  
Giulio, having on such fortune touch'd,  
Wilt ne'er leave port again?

*Giu.* My lot with thine,  
Both with thy brother's, all with Rome are knit  
Indissolubly!

*Vio.* And dost thou not think,  
Giulio, that my brother nobly wears  
His greatness—as though born heir to kingdoms?

*Giul.* His brain, undazed by triumph, blanches not—  
As eagles droop their eyes not in the sun.—  
'Tis a noble nature, warring with crime,  
Yet tender to the criminal.

*Vio.* Heav'n shield  
Him ever! I so long'd that thou hadst been  
That day in Rome ('tis but three weeks since),  
When to St. Peter's Church the Tribune march'd,  
Blessing to solicit on the Standards  
Of the "Good Estate." Such crowds, Giulio,  
From the Lateran to Hadrian's Bridge,  
Never in thy life thou saw'st. 'Tis unguess'd  
Where that night all to lay their heads found place.  
No beggars, rags, nor sign of poverty.  
All transform'd, it seemed, to sudden wealth.  
And the flowers! Ceres had pour'd the bloom  
Of twenty summers on our wrinkled streets!  
Each column wreathed in violets, and the  
Rose and orange flower were as incense  
On the heavy air. Such a sea of faces!  
All Rome was in the streets. To gaze, it seem'd,  
The very goats ceased browsing! First approach'd  
Chancellors and Chamberlains bravely garb'd;  
Then Guards on steeds that arrogantly pranced,  
High curvetting with pride. Then after these,  
Each with his banner borne before him, march'd  
Afoot the Consuls of the Regions.  
Glittering officers, whose gay offices



I scarce knew, came in thick swarms as bright as  
Fireflies. Then I saw one I knew. He  
Did march alone, and bore an unbared sword,  
The sword of Justice—the bearer Rossi,  
Son of our old doorkeeper. Some there were  
That laugh'd and said, “Lo, th' executioner !”  
Then pass'd a man, following our Rossi,  
On whom the eyes of men should have been fix'd,  
For to either side he scatter'd silver,  
Which two in ponderous sacks bore with them.  
I could not much regard them, nor methinks  
Cared any of the poorest for their alms ;  
For now it seem'd as tho' from 'neath the clouds  
The sun shot forth. My Brother came ! The eye  
Of Rome, on whom all Roman eyes were bent.  
Heavens ! how small, how dwarf'd, all seem'd to  
shrink

As he rode by, riding 'midst a forest  
Of bright halberts ! O, how the crowd hail'd him !

*Giu.* Had they been dumb, the stones had found  
a voice !

*Vio.* Giulio, I must tell thee of his garb.  
His robe of velvet green was slash'd with gold,  
And from his shoulders fell in ample folds,  
Half hiding his brave steed, a mantle full  
Of richest minever. In his right hand  
He bore a wand of polish'd steel, whereof  
The summit was a cross of gold (therein

Enshrined a fragment of the Blessed Cross).  
O ! the shouting, Giulio, and the roar  
Of loving voices—all for my brother  
Cola ! I could have wept—nay, I did weep.  
Francesca, too,—she could not have forborne.—  
Stay—I did not speak of Cola's head-gear.  
A morion of steel upon his head  
He wore, whereon was bound a myrtle-wreath ;  
In very truth he look'd a king !

*Giu.* In Rome,  
My Violante, thou must not talk of kings.  
We strive to forget that such beings are.

*Vio.* Then, if thou wilt have no king, he bore him  
Like a Tribune !

*Giu.* What more didst see ?

*Vio.* Not that  
Which I most gladly would have seen—thyself !  
Yet more heralds, cavalcades of horsemen,  
And a vast concourse everywhere ; but now,  
Rienzi having pass'd, to Francesca  
And myself all seem'd colourless and dim,—  
O, how I longed for thee !

*Giu.* In truth, I'm glad  
I was not there ! A lady's nimble eyes,  
To shape the gay confusion of a crowd,  
Surpass a man's, as is her tongue so much  
More eloquent than his to tell of it.—

*Enter FRANCESCA.*

But she, thy sister,—thy brother's wife?—How  
Should I call her now?

*Fran. (advancing).* By what name if not  
Francesca? If 'twixt us twain 'tis to be

[*Both turn to her.*]

"Sir" and "Madam," Giulio, I shall hate  
This sudden flight to greatness, little lov'd  
Already!

*Vio.* Is he not foolish, sister?

*Fran.* Violante, 'tis thou must school him better.  
But tell me, was Cola with ye lately?

*Vio.* I have not seen him since this morning,  
When affairs of moment call'd him from us.

*Fran.* When do they call him not, these grave  
affairs?

I do rejoice to see him great, foremost,  
Confess'd by every tongue (albeit  
That I did know him long ere greatness fell  
Upon his shoulders like a mantle), but  
These cares of State seem to me like vapours,  
That hide from me my husband's very shape.  
For those you love shun greatness, Violante!

*Vio.* Francesca! there was a time not distant  
When I was of your mind, and I did think  
The lowliest lot most to be pray'd for,  
But seeing that in Rome there are no clouds

Upon the heights you mount——

*Fran.*

O, my sister !

Speak not thus so lightly. No clouds, you say ?

Alas ! you know not——

*Enter RIENZI.*

*Rien.*

I disturb ye not ?

*Fran. (turning to him).* My Cola, 'tis thy absence  
that disturbs.

Thy presence brings peace, rest, and happiness.

*Rien.* But thou should'st reason thus. Apart from  
thee

Thou art the safer, in that we then are  
Working for thy welfare. Present with thee,  
I am turn'd loiterer !

*Fran.*

Then, Cola, be

A loiterer for a space. By your leave (*to VIOLANTE*),  
My sister, and thine, Giulio, likewise.  
Till vespers !

*[They embrace and salute each other. Exeunt  
VIOLANTE and GIULIO.]*

RIENZI *and* FRANCESCA.

Is there some special task

That leaves thee scarce an hour—for idling ? No,  
But for common wants, for rest or leisure.  
In thy slumber ('tis brief eno', I wot !)

I hear thee mutter, see thee clutch the air  
And start. Yet is there danger? What is it?

*Rien.* My wife! thou knowest that authority  
Must sleep with one eye open. Those of pow'r  
Possess'd must oftentimes sacrifice such things,  
Which are to them no sacrifice at all.  
To hold that we have gain'd is hardship none.

*Fran.* Well, I will not preach. But, Cola, tell me  
What is there afoot. I know there is somewhat.  
And in this palace there is talk of plots  
Of Nobles, bribes, conspiracies, I know not what.

*Rien.* My Francesca, 'twere not to be supposed  
That in palaces where we house but now  
There should be for jealousies no corner.  
The wide-spreading furnace, stifled so late,  
Is smould'ring still—may leap to flame again,  
Should watchmen sleep.

*Enter CERRONI.*

How, Cerroni!

*Cer.* Pardon,  
Sir Tribune; thine likewise, gentle Madam!  
But I would speak with thee instantly.

*Rien.* Thus  
Is it, Francesca. We must break off now.

*Fran.* So soon! I had so many things to say.  
In parting us, whene'er—how seldom is't!—  
A few brief moments favour us, I think

These men do find malignant pastime.

*Rien.*

'Twixt

Cerroni and myself this business,

Though secret, will be settled speedily ;

Then will I come straight to thee, Francesca.

*Fran.* There is no peril threat'ning, Cola, that  
So suddenly he comes ?

*Rien.*

There had been much

Had he not come, Francesca.

*Fran.*

Is it so,

Indeed, my husband ? Then I shall better

Like this trusty counsellor of thine than

Yesterday I did.

*Cer.*

Pray your pardon, Sir ;

Time presses.

*Rien.*

Go you now, Francesca.

*Fran.*

So !

Thou wilt follow quickly. (*Aside to CERRONI*) Signor,  
one word.

'Tis said that thou art faithful and most true,

That thou art brave as lions are, and that

Never self-seeking mars the onward sweep

Of thy high purpose. Nay, Sir ! by thy leave—

The Tribune holds thee, dost thou not know it, Sir ?

Of sterling weight in his regards ; I think

His own right hand seems to him less trusty.

*Cer.* Nay, Madam, I do disclaim such virtues ;

I have not any worth. That you are pleased

To paint my fancied merit in such tints  
Obscures the little good I might possess.  
I love the Tribune! As he serves Rome, in  
Such measure serve I him. You doubt it not?

*Fran.* I do not doubt thee; yet am I jealous  
That thou canst do so much, I nothing!

*Rien.* Hear  
I rightly? Was the word "jealous"? I shall  
Have cause if you twain longer parley.

*Fran.* Well,  
Cola, I will no longer hinder thee.  
Fare thee well, Signor Cerroni! Thou dost  
Take my husband from me, but so thou shield'st  
From whatsoever perils threaten him,  
I shall not grudge him to thee. Farewell, Sir!

*Cer.* Lady, farewell! and have no doubts at all.

*Fran.* Cola, come thou quickly!

*Rien.* I shall, Francesca,  
Follow thee straight. Now, Cerroni?

[*Exit* FRANCESCA.]

*Cer.* Most sure  
Intelligence has reach'd me, Tribune,  
That the Nobles—well-nigh all the hated  
Brood—at noon to-day do come together,  
'Neath spurious pretext that they discuss  
Some terms of marriage-contract betwixt  
Carlo Frangipani and a damsel  
Of Colonna's house.

*Rien.* Thou think'st, then, that for  
Sinister purpose they be met?

*Cer.* I do  
Know it, Tribune.

*Rien.* And the proof, Cerroni?

*Cer.* Yet to be resolved ! But proof thou shalt have,  
Tribune, and in a few hours.

*Rien.* What wouldst thou  
Have me do ? Nought violent. 'Twere rash,  
While proof be lacking. What say'st thou ?

*Cer.* Though to  
Net these nobles on the instant to my  
Sense were just, I do not, Tribune, counsel  
Violence. Thou art strong ; thy strength they fear.  
Rather make use of weapons that they deem  
Their own, wherein they hold thee weak.

*Rien.* Proceed,  
Cerroni. And these weapons ?

*Cer.* Cunning and  
Craft, my Tribune ! Send trusty messengers,  
And bid these Nobles all to feast with thee  
To-morrow. Say that to celebrate their  
New-found amity, this banquet is a  
Pledge. Moreover, as the Governor of  
Rome, thou tak'st upon thee thus to honour  
These nuptials in their noble houses.  
The while one messenger, unannounc'd, his  
Seeming jovial errand delivering,



Doth throw them off their guard, another shall  
Find means to hide himself, and unobserv'd  
To mark their secret intercourse.

*Rien.* Whom should  
We send upon this secret enterprise?  
Hast thou ta'en thought thereof?

*Cer.* Ay, Tribune, thus.  
Rossi himself to be your messenger—  
A man thou lov'st, cautious and wary,  
Knowing the uses better than do most  
Of eye and ear. With him but one other—  
Soldi, brave and resolute and cunning.

*Rien.* Devoted followers, I do know them  
Both; I have none trustier. Cerroni,  
Dost thou not think the Nobles, thus being  
Summon'd to this sudden feast, may be at  
Pains, ere they accept, to find some reason  
That I bid them?

*Cer.* Thou dost know these Noble  
Gluttons well; e'en if their minds misgave them,  
Their stomachs would find a cellarful of  
Reasons wherewith to drug suspicion!

*Rien.* Enough. Cerroni, let us forthwith act.  
Charge Rossi and Soldi with this errand  
As from myself. Stay; send Fortifiocca  
To me straight.

*Cer.* Fortifiocca! Tribune, of  
Him beware!

*Rien.* Beware of him ! say'st thou ? Why,  
He's entirely my creature. What dost  
Thou know of him, Cerroni ?

*Cer.* He is as—  
As treachery itself.

*Rien.* Why, the man is  
Tame and gentle as a dog, fetches and  
Carries, and doth watch mine eyes. I think he  
Reads my thoughts almost.

*Cer.* I would that thou  
Couldst his decipher ! I can show thee proof  
That he doth secretly communicate  
With many of the Nobles.

*Rien.* What ! the man  
That I did pardon ? Then treachery is  
In the camp itself ! Give me, Cerroni,  
Clear proof of this, and Fortifiocca dies.

*Cer.* Thou shalt have it, Tribune, ere the sun sets.

*Rien.* To work at once, Cerroni.

*Cer.* Ne'er fear for  
Proofs, Tribune. Be sure of this—we'll catch them  
All red-handed !

*Rien.* No more delay. Away ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—COLONNA'S *house. Rome. Daytime.*

STEPHEN COLONNA, GIANNI *and* PIETRO COLONNA,  
JOHN OF VICO, SAVELLI, FRANGIPANI, *and others*  
*of the Nobles. (Laughing as the scene opens.)*

*Sav. (reading to the others one of RIENZI'S proclamations).* Yet listen, lords!—we do lack a herald.

Thus it runs,—titles and dignities

By the score. Old and new, which like ye best?

“Nicholas Severe and Clement, Tribune

Of Liberty, of Justice, and of Peace!”

*Ste.* An ill-match'd team, and restive for our young  
Charioteer; the horses of the Sun  
Need all the skill of Phœbus Apollo.

Less cunning hands than his may jeopardize

The chariot! Pardon, Count, the titles?

*Sav.* A brave array to come! “Illustrious  
Liberator of the Holy Roman  
Republic; Defender of Italy;  
Friend of Mankind!”

*Gian.*

’Tis past all tolerance!

*John of V.* Gianni, our new master is too humble.  
Why from the roll omits he “Pontifex  
Maximus”? Great Cæsar bore the title,  
And, if history lie not, he did pay  
A fair round sum for that same dignity!

*Sav.* My troth ! I am, or was, the suzerain  
Of this fellow ; I'm but his vassal now.  
Th' upstart ! wagging his braggart tongue, like  
Jove his gracious head inclines, nathless  
Not too high to condescend to Pontiffs,  
And even to our mother Church extends,  
As though she were a Vashti, the sceptre  
Of Ahasuerus !

*Ste.* Have patience !  
Success so sudden will have sudden end.  
He mounts high upon the perilous path  
That leads to fortune. Let him go higher,  
And still scramble higher. There's no return  
For him again to safe obscurity.  
His fall is certain, for plebeian brains  
Soon giddy turn on unaccustom'd heights.

*Gia.* Nay, noble father, but success breeds friends ;  
And daily his increase, buzzing about  
His brand-new splendours as flies round honey.

*Ste.* Gianni ! of the same fickle air, a breath  
That blew the bubble will dissolve it.

*Pie.* So !  
And are we, chain'd up in this our Palace,  
Within a stone's throw of the Capitol,  
On chance to wait, the whilst this notary  
And his low satellites loll on our seats,  
Carousing with our own gold goblets ? O !  
Whate'er be the cast, let us have one throw.

*Sav.* The boy is all for action, and is right.

*John of V.* But, noble Count, for action troops we  
Need, and arms. Where be thine?

*Ste.* John of Vico,

Thou speak'st wisely. We cannot now wage war.

By stratagem this upstart must be foil'd.

Seeing that his house rests on a quicksand,

Wherefore in rash and unripe venture risk

One hair of your patrician heads,—one

Of your venerable beard, my grandson!

Though we of our old strength be sadly shorn,

And through our careless fingers Rome hath slipp'd,

Yet on the rudder of our interests

We yet may lay a steady hand, and snatch

From the jaws of our own shame our safety.

Let us, then, smile upon his state, submit

Our limbs as though with the current swimming;

If need be, share his pastimes, with much talk

Of Cæsar, Antonine, Pompey, Brutus,

And all the classic jargon that his slaves .

And parasites servilely scatter.

*Pic.* O

Gods! to hear my grandsire thus advise!

How are we Colonnas fallen, when with

Such varlets 'tis thought good to temporize!

Men, that if Rome stood not upon her head

To-day, were in our pantries too well lodged!

*Ste.* My boy, keep you such choler in your brains?

You'll be a politician never !  
Even with such tools as ye have hold of  
Must ye work. We must our hot impulses bend  
To the stiff yoke of present circumstance.

*Fran.* Yet may other means arise, and shortly.—  
Guards, even the most tribune-loving guards,  
Ofttimes have empty pockets ; a score of  
Ducats nicely administer'd among  
The needier sort might work miracles.

*Sav.* There's many a sword, too, girding ourselves,  
Might be thrust home, were suspicions lull'd,  
And, methinks, Rienzi wholly trusts us !

*Pie.* O politicians ! Sir, what is this ?

*Enter ROSSI suddenly.*

*Ros.* Your pardon, noble Sir, that unannounced  
I trespass thus, but finding, as I came,  
The entrance-hall deserted, no servant  
Stirring, I gave my ears the task to guide.

*Col.* Well, Sir, if in good faith you come, give  
tongue.

*Fran.* Stay ! the fellow's face I know ; he doth hold  
Of the Tribune office. What ! dost thou not ?

*Ros.* Ay, noble Count, 'tis from himself I come.

*Ste.* Indeed ! From the mighty ! What errand, then,  
Brings thee to this poor house ? Pray, Sir, impart.

*Ros.* Noble Lords, by order of the Tribune  
His greeting I am bid to bear to all

That dwell within these walls. Likewise to crave  
Your presence severally to a feast  
The Tribune, in your especial honour,  
Doth hold to-morrow. These be the letters.

[*Gives to COLONNA letters.*]

*Col. (opening letters).* The Tribune makes too much  
of us. He heaps  
His courtesies on men that, fallen now,  
Can render little. Say you thus. My Lords,  
In all your noble names I may send back  
A gracious answer? Count Savelli,  
Frangipani, John of Vico, Gianni?

[*All bow their consent.*]

Our golden cups thou know'st, Pietro—shall  
We not drain them once again?

*Pie. (turning away impatiently).* As thou wilt,  
Grandsire.

*Col.* Thou hear'st (*to Rossi*) we shall all attend—  
All that be here.

*Sav.* Stay, Sir; what other guests  
Are bidden?

*Ros.* The list, my lord, is lengthy.

*Sav.* But of nobles other than those present?

*Ros.* Of the Orsini there are six; also  
Counts Conti, Caffarelli, and Terni.

*Sav.* Counts Malatesta and Corneto—what?

*Ros.* Pardon, my lord; I deemed your lordship  
knew

Counts Malatesta and Corneto are  
With the Tribune at all times and seasons,  
The Tribune hath few friends more intimate.

*Piz.* I wish him joy of both ! You have leave, Sir,  
(*To Rossi*) Our answer to the Tribune to convey—  
“ Nicholas Severe and Clement.” You know  
His other titles ; I have forgot them ! [*Exit Rossi.*  
How snared the fellow Malatesta ?

*Fran.* ’Tis  
No such prize, save that he hath some cunning  
To construe clouds and fickleness of winds,  
And when the swallows hover near the ground  
He girds himself for change. A weak vessel !  
His opinions are well disciplined,  
And march in rearward of his interests.

*Sav.* I know him well, Count Frangipani. I’faith,  
Malatesta is a wretched creature,  
Ever must be upon the winning side ;  
Yet will he scarcely loose an arrow forth !  
A storm well past, in blooming impudence  
He steps forth, swearing that he hath battled  
With the tempest. All he must have, but nought  
He’ll venture. Kick me such things of velvet !

*Fran.* Thou wilt see anon, when fickle Fortune,  
Her wheel reversing, scatters these puppets,  
Malatesta, with smiling countenance,  
And in the glossiness of innocence,  
Shall emerge and shall forthwith fold us all



Within the sanctuary, ne'er denied,  
Of his own providential bosom !

*Sav.* No, he'll ne'er again out-distance Fortune.—  
Patience of gods and men is bankrupt.

*Fran.* Nay, Count Savelli ! we shall see such men  
Ne'er come to harm—through fires scathless pass ;—  
They're a kind of salamander statesmen.  
But, touching this feast now, 'tis opportune !  
We might have waited months, yet found no chance  
So favourable. The fool, blinded by  
Fortune, puts the axe within our hands  
And bares his neck. What says Colonna ?

*Ste.* It  
Seems the coxcomb doth destruction court !  
And should no other course commend itself,  
'Twere not amiss to send him spinning down  
The precipice whose brink he plays upon.  
But I love not such cut-throat vengeance.  
Moreover, there's exceeding risk. Granting  
The fellow were expunged, lay there headless,  
'Tis one head only that your stroke from off  
The Hydra doth dis sever ; then at once  
By all his myrmidons, from the Legate  
To the barber-uncle, ye are engirt.—  
No midnight massacres, my noble friends !

*Sav.* Be assured 'twill not miscarry, Count.  
Ne'er heed the myrmidons. When they shall see  
Their leader fell'd, panic will fall on them ;

They'll run adrift like unto unmoor'd ships,  
Whose anchors by sudden tornado have  
Been violently wrench'd. Granted that we  
Have at our beck few soldiers now; yet  
Each slave that calls each of us lord may wear  
Within his sleeve a dagger. They'll suffice  
To lop the branches when the tree lies low.  
Whose hand to strike first, and at what moment,  
'Tis now to be determined.

*Ste.*

I pray ye

Close the door and speak more low, if on such  
Perilous matters it seems good to touch.

*[Some of the Nobles go to the door. As they do so  
enter a Servant of COLONNA.]*

*Serv.* Your Lordships' pardon. I bring a letter  
For the most noble Count Frangipani.

*[Gives letter to FRANGIPANI.]*

*Ste.* Enough. Begone! Be within call below (to  
Servant).

*[Exit Servant.]*

*Fran. (opens letter).* No signature. But, methinks,  
the writing

Runs in a hand not unfamiliar.

*[Gives letter to STEPHEN COLONNA.]*

*Ste.* By St. George, Frangipani, thou say'st true!  
'Tis as mine own son's voice apparent. Thou,  
Savelli, thyself examine; 'tis clear.

*Sav.* None that were of the Council could have  
doubts

'Tis from the Secretary, Tomaso  
Fortifiocca !

*All.* Fortifiocca ! Read ! read !

[SAVELLI gives letter to COUNT FRANGIPANI]

*Fran. (reading).* "Noble Frangipani, — Know that thou, with others of the most Noble, art to-morrow to be present at the banquet, I do not doubt but that of so favourable an hour ye all will make the most. The dilemma, whereof your Noble self and I, your servitor, have spoken much and oft, may to-morrow night be solved. For the cutting of Gordian knots I have a taste. Help ye also (with your best and sharpest) to swift solution of the question. Neither write nor send. If ye be of my mind, a watchword as a sign to act is all we need. When wine has slackened vigilance and loosened tongues, speak no matter how thrown in—the one word 'Sylla.' That name will certify ye all are ready and resolved and wait for me to pull the string."

Thus it ends. I knew he would not fail us.

*Sav.* Why, this is the very kiss of Fortune !

*John of V.* So kind, 'twould seem to be a traitor's kiss.

*Fran.* Never fear, as the needle to the north  
The man's as true, and he hates Rienzi,  
Whom with abundant flattery he hath  
Blinded. Nor is he rash. All chances he hath  
Counted and fore-reckon'd. Be sure of it.

*Ste.* If on such desperate venture, Count, thou

And others 'mongst us are determinèd,  
Trust me, I shall in no wise hinder ye.  
But from such enterprise, whereof my mind  
Misgives (nor doth my load of years fit me  
For such course), pardon me, Nobles, that I  
Do hold aloof.

*Pic.* But not so I, Grandsire,  
By your leave.

*Sav.* Nor I.

*Gian.* Nor I.

*The others.* Nor I.

*Ste.* Act

As ye list, I will impede no man, not  
E'en thee, my grandson !

*Fran.* Somewhat of peril—  
Be it all ours, noble Count Colonna—  
Needs must be faced, or we shall petrify.  
Time urges, and we must grasp the weapon  
The chance hath forged. What say ye, Nobles all ?

*All.* "Sylla !" "Sylla !"

*Fran.* Then be it so. We are  
Agreed. To-morrow night we meet to shake  
The shame we suffer from off our shoulders.  
Meantime I will visit the Orsini,  
Against the common foe they'll join with us.  
Count Savelli, I pray thee, go with me.

*Sav.* You may command me, noble Count.

[*Exeunt FRANGIPANI and SAVEILL.*

*RIENZI.*

Stephen,

*John of V.*

What dost thou think?

Think, John of Vico—think!

*Ste.*

That is a word disused and obsolete.

Action, wise or foolish, must go first;

Thereafter thought may hobble as it may.

We old ones must make room; yet blood is thick;

If we cannot lead—why, we must follow!

*[Exeunt omnes.]*

SCENE IV.—*A street in Rome.*

*Enter CERRONI and ROSSI.*

*Cer.* So, they courteously received you—good!  
And that they all do come is better yet.

'Tis strange—fortunate, too—you should have chanced  
So suddenly upon them. What read you  
In their faces?

*Ros.*

Somewhat there was, I scarce  
Know what, of slightest stir throughout the room,  
As I did enter, as of men that stretch  
Themselves and sigh, when 'midst th' unravelling  
Of tangled problems there is pause, and eyes  
Travel around the architraves as though  
To think the deeper. Then they being 'ware  
Of me, it seem'd that they did counterfeit  
They thought on nothing, and did make a feint  
Of idle chatter!

*Cer.* Your thought you show'd not?

*Ros.* I am sure my face was as a statue's.

*Cer.* That was good. And then you tarried not?

*Ros.* No,

My task discharged, to loiter were to rouse

Suspicion. With show of reverence

I straightway took my leave. Without the door,

Soldi, whom I had taken to spy out

What might be spied, I found awaiting me.

No servant of the palace was at hand.

A low and sudden passage to the left

Ran, so did it seem, behind the arras

That clothed the room wherein the nobles sate.

Within to creep I motion'd Soldi.

As quick as thought and silent he did speed.

What in his hiding-place he may have heard

(So he come to no harm, as I indeed

Pray he may not), we shall ere nightfall learn.

*Cer.* Fortune speed him !

*Enter MARCO and LUCA VILLANI.*

*Mar.* Your humble servant, Sirs !

Hast thou, Cerroni, convinced the Tribune ?

*Cer.* Ye know the Tribune, to believe the thing

He most desires, is exceeding prone ;

He thinks that men upon whose heads favours

He hath heap'd, should by gratitude be stirr'd.

*Mar.* Their hearts, I know, are as distant from him

As they were ever. He cannot win them  
Thus, and, to bring the peril nearer home,  
He places near his heart that scorpion  
Fortifiocca !

*Vil.* He of all men the worst !  
And in the days when men made mouths at those  
That did Colonna's overthrow foretell,  
The most open-mouthed against Rienzi.

*Cer.* Luca Villani, thou didst ne'er speak a  
Word more true. But trust me, we watch the rogue—  
I, Corneto, Lulli, and some others ;  
I think we yet shall catch him.

*Mar.* Pray Heaven  
We shall and speedily ! But of this feast,  
Cerroni, which the Tribune celebrates  
To-morrow, know you whether the nobles  
Hold aloof ?

*Cer.* What, Marco, hold aloof ! By  
St. George, they do not so. They come in flocks !  
Rossi can tell you that.

*Ros.* Ay, citizens,  
Count Colonna was most prompt to answer  
For them all.

*Vil.* What, for the Orsini too ?

*Ros.* Nay, Sir, Frangipani speaks for them.

*Mar.* And  
Do none withhold their presence ?

*Ros.* Far from that ;

With choice of courteous words, Colonna  
Bid me instantly assure the Tribune  
That all would come. Citizens, your pardon ;  
I must convey their answer to himself.

*Cer.* I will with you, Rossi, for the Tribune  
Expects us both. Sirs, farewell !

[*Exeunt CERRONI and ROSSI.*

*Mar.* Cerroni  
Is much trusted by Rienzi. He's sound,  
Think you ?

*Vil.* I think he is a man 'twere good  
To stand well with. He likes you or not likes you ;  
And if he loves you not, he is sudden  
To credit you with all th' imperfectness  
To our half-finished natures possible !

*Mar.* Well, he loves Rome, and our new Tribune,  
And most devoutly hates the Nobles. There  
We join issue with him wholly. I think  
We shall rid us of them shortly.

*Vil.* E'en so,  
If Rienzi do keep firm. Come, Marco !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Capitol. A room in RIENZI'S Palace.*

*Enter RIENZI, CERRONI, ROSA, ROSSI, and SOLDI.*

*Rien.* And none beheld thee yesterday,—art sure  
Of it, Luigi ?



*Sol.* Tribune, I am most sure.

*Rien.* Then thou hast done well and bravely, Luigi,  
Into the lion's jaws to thrust thy head.

Rossi, tell me, how did look Colonna?

*Ros.* Tribune ! he stands well up to the burden  
Time lays upon him. The evil fortune  
That rains upon his house not one furrow  
Of his brow hath deepen'd. Most cheerfully  
He bore him, and he smiled.

*Rien.* I know that smile !  
Such is the look the calmèd ocean  
Wears, when satiate with the wrecks of fleets,  
And after night's hideous revelry  
The morn breaks fair ! And the others, Rossi—  
Tell me of them. Were their looks heavy ?

*Ros.* No,  
Tribune. Indeed, I mark'd and heard before  
That I did enter abundant signs of  
Merriment.

*Rien.* Say you so ? I do marvel,  
Cerroni, that men bereaved of power,  
And thus o'ertaken by adversity,  
Can so beguile themselves !

*Cer.* Nay, Sir Tribune,  
Let their old sides with senile cackling shake !  
They've well-nigh grinn'd their lives out. When, ere  
long,  
They awake in hell, some tough matters there,

Maybe they'll find, to depress the corners  
Of their mouths !

*Rien.* Pray you rather, Cerroni,  
For their conversion. Heaven forgive  
These men !

*Cer.* Forgive them ! ay, but first let Heav'n  
Punish.

*Rien.* Soldi, I charge thee, and by all  
Thou hold'st most dear, to breathe no syllable  
Of that which thou hast made report to-day.

*Sol.* I am sworn to secrecy, my Tribune.

*Rien.* Silence is golden, so a wise man said ;  
Thus shalt thou find it, Soldi.

*Sol.* Nay, Tribune,  
I need no gold. He who serves Rome rewards  
Himself.

*Rien.* I would that all were of thy mind !  
What hour is't now ?

*Cer.* 'Tis four o'clock.

*Rien.* So late !

Then what we have to do must suddenly  
Be done. In two hours I shall expect ye.

[*Exeunt CERRONI, ROSSI, and SOLDI.*]

*Rien.* Rosa, a word with thee.

*Rosa.* Tribune, say on.

*Rien.* Thus. In an hour with utmost secrecy  
Arrest Fortifiocca, and in safest  
Keeping let him be lodged within these walls,

Of this I pray thee let no man know.

*Rosa,* What !

The Secretary ? He !

*Rien.* The same.

*Rosa.* The man

That you with benefits so loaded, and  
On whose offending head your pardon heap'd  
So often coals of fire. Malefactor !

*Rien.* Ay, Rosa, his the kind of nature is  
That curdles to caresses. Gratitude  
From such I must not look to have. 'Tis o'er !  
Of this business, Rosa, seek not thou  
At present to know further. Soldi's lips  
Save to myself are seal'd. By utmost stealth  
Certain of those bidden to this banquet  
Must to-night be snared, for they come intent  
On treachery. To foil them, the first step  
Is for thyself to take. Therefore, Rosa,  
Pick out thy trustiest guards, and—Silence !

*Rosa.* Tribune, thou may'st rely upon me.

*Rien.* That

I may rely, I know. Farewell.

*Rosa.* Farewell. [*Exit Rosa.*]

*Rien. (solus).* So ! I cannot win their love. War,  
still war,

They seek. Well, they shall have it to the knife !  
There's but one way left to rid us of them.  
Implacable and Unappeasable !

Ye too find my pardon makes of your lives  
So great ignominy that ye thirst for  
Mine. Well, if to ye, utterly corrupt  
And rotten as ye are, life weighted thus  
Becomes intolerable, die in your sins !

*Enter* BISHOP RAYMOND.

My Holy Father !

*Bish.* Nicola, my son !

*Rien.* Your Reverence doth share with me to-night  
The honourable duties of this feast ?

*Bish.* Nay, not to-night, Rienzi.

*Rien.* Wherefore not,  
My Reverend Father ? 'Tis no holy  
Season, set in the calendar apart  
For abstinence.

*Bish.* All days with me, I hope,  
Are set apart, and methinks we Bishops  
Be ill at ease among the revellers.

*Rien.* Yea, but this banquet is no mere carouse.  
'Tis to renew a pledge of amity  
Betwixt ourselves, the rulers of New Rome,  
And those that were Nobles—our vassals now.

*Bish.* If revel can the feuds between us heal,  
And the flow of wine o'ermaster bloodshed,  
Let there be nightly banquets, then, my son.

*Rien.* Father ! in that thou dost speak of bloodshed,  
Tell me one thing, I pray—'tis of moment.

Rulers, e'en we to whom our fellow-men  
Do wholly trust them, and into whose hands  
Themselves thrust power, girding around us  
For the common weal the unchallenged sword,  
Are we by Heav'n absolved when we expunge  
Clean from the book of life one human soul ?  
Shall some mere earthly warrant us suffice ?  
Or in the lidless eye of th' Almighty  
How shows such act ? My Father, what say'st  
thou ?

*Bish.* Anointed rulers hold their pow'r from God.  
Thy fingers work His bidding ; not in vain  
Then, wield the sword. Yet do I thank high Heav'n  
That I wear none !

*Rien.* —Yet to blow out the lamp  
The breath of God hath kindled, and to hurl  
The spirit unsummon'd by his Maker  
To possible perdition !—Dare men  
Thus to the Deity fling back the soul  
He clothed with manhood ? Yet, my good Father,  
Were some vile branches lopp'd, our "Good Estate,"  
Vibrating to her core, rejuvenant,  
Were like the Eastern tree, that lavish strikes  
His root reiterant and incessant,  
Begetting forests, till beneath the glades  
And spreading labyrinths a multitude  
May couch ! Yet to this end the axe ! the axe !

*Bish.* Nay, Rienzi, an there be remedies

Less sharp and desperate than that, I trow  
Your charity to find them will not fail.

*Rien.* Alas ! My Father, I see none. There be  
Those that must die, and within these few hours !

*Bish.* Say'st thou, Cola, that this night of feasting  
Leads to the scaffold ?

*Rien.* Even at this feast—  
'Tis close at hand—men in the guise of friends,  
Of honour'd guests, come cramm'd with treachery  
E'en to the lips. Colonna, Orsini,  
Savelli, Frangipani, Vico, too—  
Thou know'st them all (the noblest names in Rome)—  
Flock here to-night like veriest tigers,  
Thirsting for blood—my blood ! Nay, 'tis all clear ;  
Forgiveness, pardon, kindness, benefits,  
Bribes, kingdoms—nothing in heaven above  
Or in the earth beneath can, by one hair,  
Allay their frenzied hate.

*Bish.* They seek thy life ?  
Then they decree their own destruction,  
And rush upon their doom with open eyes.

*Rien.* E'en from this feast they mount the scaffold  
stairs !

Yet would I not they died impenitent.

*Bish.* I know thou wouldst not. Never on thy  
soul  
Could rest such stain. These guilty men I'll see.  
Trust them to me ; I yet may save their souls.

*Rien.* At midnight, Father, visit them ; the bell  
Of the Capitol will at that hour toll.

*Bish.* I shall await that dolorous signal  
On bent knees, having with holiest rites  
High Heav'n conjured to melt their flinty hearts ;  
So I may find them soften'd, and their souls  
Will pass from earth disburden'd of this sin.

*Rien.* Be it as thou hast said. The hour is nigh—  
Believe me that my heart is very sore.  
The hate I bore these men when at the throat  
Of Rome they strain'd, as at a weary stag  
The gnashing deer-hounds leap, seems to me past.  
I could have blasted them with Heaven's lightning,  
Or into hell's sulph'rous furnace plunged them !  
Yet, now they seem to strike at me alone,  
My hate evaporates to pity. Come !  
Like an untravell'd sea this night doth seem.  
I shall be glad when the darkness lifts. Come !

*Exeunt RIENZI and RAYMOND.*

SCENE VI.—*The Banqueting-room. RIENZI'S Palace  
on the Capitol. Tables gorgeously appointed.  
Servants in rich attire employed in loading the  
tables with fruit, flowers, lights, etc.*

*Filippo (a Servant of the Tribune).* Good, very  
remarkably good ! Our noble guests won't starve to-  
night, I'll warrant.

*Baptista* (*another* Servant). Starve indeed, and in the Palace of our lavish Tribune! I'll take my oath they won't starve. And, by Castor and Pollux, Bacchus and Apollo, neither shall my noble self go empty!

*Fil.* Castor and Pollux, Bacchus and the other gentleman, will have to answer for it if I too don't get my share. But, Tista, where learned you such grand oaths?

*Bap.* (*at his work*). Bless thee, Filippo, dost thou suppose that a gentleman of my long service conjures by any one 'neath the degree of a divinity? Therefore I say by Bacchus and Apollo, especially Bacchus (he being, as thou know'st, a god appropriate to the occasion).

*Fil.* But the plenty, the abundance, the rivers of wine, Tista! Thou ne'er saw'st this in the days of old Colonna.

*Bap.* I don't say "nay," and I don't say "yea." There is abundance, that I'll say; and methinks I have a just eye, and recognize abundance when it comes my way.

*Fil.* He's a jovial liver and has an open hand, the Tribune. I'll seal, sign, and deliver that.

*Bap.* Body of Bacchus! how thy tongue wags! We shall ne'er finish; and the noble guests arriving. There, there! they are coming—they are here!



*Enter Servants, who usher in MALATESTA and CONTI.*

Room there, room for these noble gentlemen !

*Mal.* "Swim with the current and sail with the  
wind,

Thus comfort and ease through life shalt thou find !"

'Tis more than mere poetry, my Conti !

'Tis sound practical philosophy, and,

By due attention to this gold'n rule,

We both have weather'd storms, and find ourselves

Secure and snug and dry in port.

*Con.*

'Tis so !

I half believe the man a sorcerer.

Had St. George's head, that nigh in his shrine,

Lies stranger to his body, open'd its

Weird lips this wondrous story to put forth,

I had not yielded credence.

*Enter CORNETO, VILLANI, and MARCO.*

*Cor.*

Your servant,

Noble Sirs. I am glad to see you well.

*Con.* Corneto, I rejoice that we to-night

Are boon-companions. Malatesta,

Too, will drink the deeper for this meeting.

*Mal.* Were the wine thinner than 'tis like to be,

To pledge my friend I'd risk the perilous

Draught—within the bounds of reason.

*Cor.*

I thank

Ye much, gentlemen, and shall crave your leave

To drink to ye both. But, Malatesta,  
Beware to-night thy hearty fellowship  
Into the pow'r of the physician  
Deliver thee not !

*Mala.* Do not fear me, Count,  
The wine is sound, and very good indeed.  
It is to-night the Comet-vintage that  
We swallow !

*Enter RIENZI'S retinue.* Heralds, Trumpeters,  
Standard-bearers, Prefects *of the Palace*, Notaries,  
Chamberlains, Soldiers, *and* TRISTAN. *Then*  
RIENZI, MARCO, LULLI, CERRONI, *and others.*

*Rien.* Gentlemen, ye are welcome !  
I crave forgiveness of ye all. Pardon  
Me that I come so late.

*Cor.* Tribune, not so.  
'Tis we that need forgiveness ; we are here  
Before the hour you bade us.

*Rien.* 'Tis not so.  
Believe me. I had not so neglected,  
But often it is State affairs will thrust  
Aside our manners ; thus was it to-night.

*Enter ROSA.*

*Rosa (aside to the Tribune).* 'Tis done ; the Secre-  
tary lies fast bound.  
I think that no man knows of it.

*Rien.* I thank  
Thee much, good Rosa. Thou hast been most prompt.  
[*They converse apart.*]

*Mal.* The Tribune wears a troubled countenance.  
What is afoot now, that he talks apart?

*Vil.* Be patient, Sir, you will shortly see  
His brow unfurrow'd ; no man at table  
More jovial than Rienzi ! [*RIENZI and ROSA separate.*]

*Mal.* Captain  
Rosa ! good evening to you : any news ?—

*Rosa.* Good evening, Sir ; O, news in plenty !

*Mal.* Castor and Pollux ! Quickly let us hear.

*Rosa.* We've a new king—Bohemian Charles !

*Mal.* Call you that news ? Bah !

*Rosa.* Twenty-four hours since  
'Twas news. What would you have ?

*Mal.* Captain Rosa,  
Know'st thou not that news resembles manna ?  
Being one day old, they both are noisome !—

*Rien.* (*to ROSA*). Rosa ! thou wilt not fail me  
when thou hear'st  
The signal ?

*Rosa.* Sir, be sure I will not fail. [*Exit ROSA.*]

*Enter STEPHEN, GIANNI, and PIETRO COLONNA,  
GUISEPPE and NICOLA ORSINI, CAFFARELLI,  
SAVELLI, FRANGIPANI, VICO, and others.*

*Rien.* (*advancing to meet them*). Sirs, ye are most  
welcome. 'Tis most kindly

Done. I scarcely dared expect ye.

[*The Nobles and RIENZI converse.*

*Cer. (aside).*

They're all

Trapp'd! All should go well now.

*Lul.*

I'm sure of it.

*Rien.* Will it please you to be seated? I think  
That all are present. Noble Colonna,  
Have I your leave to seat me on your left?  
Count Savelli, this is your place. If it  
So please you (*motions SAVELLI to the chair on his left*),

Count Corneto, may I crave  
You to place the noble Count Orsini  
At your side? (*RINALDO ORSINI sits next to COR-*  
*NETO, who sits opposite to RIENZI*) Count  
Frangipani next—so.

Counts Malatesta, Caffarelli, too,  
Will ye not be seated?

[*GIANNI and PIETRO COLONNA sit at the end*  
*of the table nearest the stage, CAFFARELLI*  
*opposite to them.*

*Gian. (aside).* I did not see  
Fortifiocca. Didst thou, Pietro, see him?

*Piet.* No, my father, and I wonder.

*Vico (next to CAFFARELLI).* There is  
A chair unfill'd yet, and I do not see  
The man who should have been the first to come.  
(*To RIENZI*) Our host expects another guest?

*Rien.*

You mark

The vacant place? There is another guest  
To come, yet scarcely to be call'd a guest ;  
He's of our daily life—Fortifiocca,  
My Secretary. Ye do know him well,  
Count Frangipani ! I think he was in  
Days gone by especial favourite  
Of thine?

*Fran.* Ay, ay, all of the Council knew  
Well Tomaso Fortifiocca.

*Rien.* He serves  
Me zealously—is wedded to his desk.  
E'en in his sleep, I think, is visited  
By dreams of precedents and protocols.  
Well, he will be here anon, but his place  
Being vacant is no cause our goblets  
Should stand empty. (*To a Servant*) Sirrah ! do ;  
not see  
The flow of wine is chok'd ?

*Nic. Ors.* I do not like  
This man's exceeding courtesy, no more  
Than Fortifiocca's absence.

*Gui. Ors.* Pray Heaven  
There has been no bungling !

*Pie.* Did you not mark,  
My father, as we pass'd the outer court,  
More show of steel-clad men than we of late  
Are wont to see ?

*Gian.* Ay ! I mark'd it, Pietro,

But without surprise ; for you must know, Son,  
That for all their talk of freedom, and the  
People's love, new rulers full as much  
Pay homage to the godlike pow'r of steel,  
As any of our Heav'n-anointed kings !

*Caf.* Fortifiocca still comes not. What, Gianni,  
Dost thou think ? My mind misgives.—

*Gian.* Be at ease.  
He'll not fail us, Count. I know him well. Hark !  
[*Great laughter.*

*Ste.* Tribune, that tale is of your best.

[*Laughter renewed.*

*Gian.* The wine  
Is kindling in their brains, 'twere wise to stem  
The flow.

*Caf. (to GIANNI).* It doth seem your noble father,  
Savelli also, are already flush'd.  
Being thus (you know their habit), till dawn  
They'd sit and jest. I pray you warn them now.  
They'll ne'er outquaff Rienzi.

*Gian.* True, yet wait ;  
He speaks.—

*Rien.* What, noble Signors ! twice-told tales !  
Though we may sometimes laugh at them, methinks  
'Tis that we pay tribute to the teller  
Rather than to the tale. Yet an old toast  
Were to-night more than a new story fit.  
Fortifiocca hath for toasts an aptness—

Would he were present !

*Fran.* Will you not, Tribune,  
Entreat his presence ?

*Rien.* Forthwith I will, Count.  
(*To a Servant*) In haste go one of ye ; seek out at once  
The Secretary, let him know the wine  
Is at high tide, and let him come before  
It ebb. With the Captain Rosa you are  
Like to find him. (*Aside to LULLI*) Giulio, follow him,  
And see he come not back. (*Exit GIULIO.*) (*To*

COLONNA) Count Colonna,  
Touching this toast, now. Were it not most meet,  
Being in fellowship together met,  
Further to bind ourselves to-night, and swear  
Allegiance to our mistress ?

*Ste.* Why not,  
Sir Tribune ? But to what mistress swearing ?

*Rien.* She to whose service we are pledg'd and  
sworn ;

Whose smiles we hold more dearer than our lives,  
Whose favours to attain we hourly toil,  
Whose honour is as our own, her safety  
More, whose commands speak to us like thunder,  
Putting all other sounds to silence——

*Ste.* Yet,  
Pardon me. How dost thou call the lady ?

*Rien.* Her name, Nobles, and do ye ask her name ?—  
What should it be ? 'Tis an immortal one ;

'Tis Rome, our mistress—Mistress of the World.

*Ste.* What, Rome ! Who would not drink to Rome ?

*All.* Rome ! Rome !

*Caf. (aside).* I like not such long speeches, and 'tis time

This mummary ceased. Let us to work.

*Gian.* Be

Patient yet ; Rienzi speaks again.

*Rien.* That toast I knew ye all would drink, for ye  
All are Romans, and that Rome ye might make  
The greater, ye have renounced your greatness.  
Henceforth your names in history will shine  
With those great stars that through the mists of years  
Do glow with undimm'd lustre. Romans ! ye  
Do know them well—Mucius Scævola,  
Regulus, Scipio, Cato, Brutus ;—  
Such names in the breast of each true Roman  
Shine with a holy radiance. The ground  
Beneath us, the air above, around us,  
Burn, breathe, tremble with them. Still ye do feel  
Their influence within you.—Forgive me,  
Sirs, that I am somewhat voluble, but  
Of old ye know the theme doth drive me on.—  
Count Frangipani, if thou thus far wilt  
Pardon me, a question I would ask  
Of thee.

*Fran.* Sir Tribune, no apologies ;  
Pray, so it be no riddle, ask it.



Rien.

What

Think'st thou—which of these two Romans was the Greater, Marius or Sylla?

[*As RIENZI pronounces the name of Sylla, some of the Nobles involuntarily rise to their feet, and all evince signs of agitation.*

Caf.

We are

Discover'd!

Gian.

Silence! Thou wilt ruin all.

Rien. How, gentlemen! some of ye seem troubled. What ails ye? Count Frangipani, pardon, I thought thee vers'd in our old history. Was it not Sylla—I think 'twas he—that Did destroy the Tribunate? Sylla!—O Name of evil omen for ye all!

[*At this moment the room fills suddenly and noiselessly with Soldiers, and FORTIFIOCCA, chained and guarded, appears at the back. LULLI and ROSA enter. The Soldiers surround the Nobles. GIANNI and others draw their daggers, but are immediately disarmed.*

Nay!

Gianna Colonna, thou art no Sylla—

Sharpen thy blade, man! Thy dagger hath no Sting for Tribunes! (*The bell begins to toll.*) O men of infamy,

Ye hear your doom! At dawn the headsman waits

Ye on the scaffold.—Ye have time to pray—  
Begone !

[*Excunt Nobles, guarded by Soldiers. RIENZI'S  
friends surround him with every sign of  
congratulation and joy.*

*Scene closes.*

SCENE VII.—*A room in RIENZI'S Palace. Time—  
near dawn.*

*Enter Bishop, FRA GIROLAMO, MARCO, VILLANI,  
and others.*

*Bish.* We have pray'd with them all night long,  
*Marco.*

At first they were beside themselves, rather  
With frenzy that into the lion's mouth  
They thus had blunder'd, than being stricken  
By remorse. Yet we, not to be withstood,  
Did so upon their stiffen'd heartstrings work—  
Such plenteous flow of heavenly grace  
Being to this end vouchsaf'd—that they did  
Yield their stubbornness. Their hearts are as tame  
As infants' now. Is it not thus, Friar ?

*Giro.* Ay, Legate, 'tis even as thou hast said.  
All but the old Colonna. His spirit  
Chafes as a new-caged lion ; all night long  
He flings his arms aloft and beats the air,  
And mingles curses with entreaty.



To make her silver realm a charnel-house !

*Rosa.* What say'st thou, Sir ?

*Rien.* (*in a loud voice*). I will not slay these men.

[*All astonished.*

*All.* How ! not slay them ?

*Cer.* Thou wilt not slay them, but  
The headsman shall do so.

*Rien.* I mean, they shall  
Not die.

*Cer.* Not die ! O Rienzi—Tribune—  
Be advised ! Bethink thee what thou doest !—

[*A long pause. RIENZI is seated, with his face  
buried in his hands. All retire to the  
back of the stage and converse apart.*

*CERRONI and ROSA advance.*

*Rien.* Leave me, all of ye.

*Rosa.* Tribune, your pardon.

What orders for th' headsman ?

*Rien.* Let him be gone.

*Cer.* Tribune, I would speak with you.

*Rien.* Cerroni !

What dost thou say ? [*CERRONI motions to all to go.*

*Cer.* (*aside to ROSA*). Tarry without, Rosa.

I yet will bend him to this course.

[*Exeunt Bishop, GIROLAMO, MARCO, VILLANI,  
and ROSA.*

Master !— [*A pause.*

Master !

*Rien.* What dost thou say, Cerroni?

*Cer.* What  
Madness drives thee,—(O ! o'erlook my boldness—  
To forgive these traitors? No man in Rome—  
None have such cause to know—know'th better tha  
Thyself their unforgiving natures !

*Rien.* O  
Heaven ! must it be bloodshed ever ! For  
Rome no safety but in killing and still  
In yet more killing ! No peace but through the  
Scaffold !

*Cer.* While these men live, your pow'r, Tribun  
Rests on sand. Pardon them—we are ruin'd.  
When thou canst make the tiger merciful,  
Or win the venomous barb'd tongue of snakes  
To kindness, then shalt thou find gratitude  
In the black bosoms of this vengeful brood.  
Hearts such as theirs your vengeance might forgive,  
Your mercy never !—

*Rien.* When the first Cæsar  
With one stroke might all his foes have silenc'd,  
And none to say him “nay,” he pardon'd them.  
Shall Christians, then, less Christian be  
Than Pagans ? Cæsar did pardon Brutus.—

*Cer.* And for that Brutus did Julius slay !—  
Be thyself, Tribune ! Give no Brutus chance  
To kill the foremost man whom Rome calls son.  
E'en now the hollow of your foot is plac'd

Upon the nest wherein these serpents breed ;  
If you stamp not on it they'll sting you yet.

*Rien.* Their fangs are drawn.—I will not slay these  
men.—

There's a time for mercy, and the sheath'd sword  
Hath a power oft-times the hissing blade  
Possesseth not. They have confess'd themselves  
To Heav'n ; by holy men have been absolv'd.—

*Cer.* Being so pure and penitent, 'twere meet  
And very just to send them straight above !  
Such worth as theirs may find there fit reward ;  
We rate such sudden virtues, born of fear,  
Of little value here.

*Rien.* Cerroni ! or  
All these men should suffer or none of them.  
The old Colonna with his silver hair ;  
The boy Pietro in his joyous youth,—

*Cer.* Snakes, both of them !—

*Rien.* Such hetacomb as this  
Rome doth not need. They are repriev'd !

*Cer.* Hear me,  
Tribune ! This Rome, which thou from the dust hast  
Rais'd, needs but one more stroke to finish it.—  
Thou art too gentle for these savage times.—  
Thine arm refrains. Give me thy warrant then :  
Withdraw awhile, and ere the sun shall rise,  
Thyself shall hear the joyful shout that hails  
The full and perfect reign of Liberty !

*Rien.* No, Cerroni, my mind is firm; I am  
Resolved. What ho! without. [*Writes a reprieve.*]

*Enter MARCO and ROSA.*

(*To CERRONI*) —Nay, let them not!—  
They are repriev'd. Haste ye to the Prefect,  
Both of ye. Give him this paper. No blood  
Shall flow. Bring instantly here and safely  
The conspirators.

*Mar.* What! my Tribune, all?—  
Fortifiocca also? Wilt thou spare him?

*Rien.* Marco, I have pronounc'd that this night's work  
To bloodier issues shall not lead, but  
This Tomaso Fortifiocca, on whose  
Most rancorous nature mercy herself  
Like poison would corrode, shall henceforth have  
No vantage-ground for further treachery.  
For life he is immur'd within these walls.  
Behold his sentence! (*Gives order to MARCO.*) I will  
not see him.

Enough! Upon thine errand speed forthwith,  
And bring these men before me instantly.

[*Exeunt MARCO and ROSA.*]

*Cer.* 'Tis rash in th' extreme. Your mercifulness  
Weakness will be held.

*Rien.* Not so, Cerroni.  
Violence and slaughter, though seeming strong,  
'Tis they are weak, but mercy is true strength.

*Enter FRANCESCA.*

How, my Francesca? Thou, and at this hour!

'Tis not yet daylight! but the blame is mine.

*Fran.* Whose eyes could close on such a night as  
this,

The ears being rent by clang of dreadful  
Knell? That doleful peal hath ceased now, Cola—  
Speak, then, 'tis of good omen, is it not?

*Rien.* E'en as the dawn descends upon the  
world,

So mercy, like a sister angel, breathes  
New hope to those that stand in jeopardy.

*Fran.* Cola, my own, thou art not one of those  
That are too mighty to be merciful.  
Thou art in this, as in all other things,  
Greater than them all!

*Rien.* Not so, Francesca!  
'Tis only the good are great. I am small—  
Thou dost not know how small! 'Tis time we go!  
We must forthwith see these men. Francesca,  
Come. Cerroni also.—Nay, come thou must!

*[Exeunt omnes.]*



SCENE VIII.—*The Capitol. A room in RIENZI's Palace.*  
*Dawn.*

*Enter RIENZI and FRANCESCA, the Bishop, CERRONI,  
LULLI, TRISTAN, MARCO, VILLANI, CORNETO,  
MALATESTA, and CONTI, Guards and Attendants.*

*Tris.* Tribune, the prisoners wait your pleasure.

*Rien.* I will see them. Let them be admitted.

[*TRISTAN goes out, and returns with the Nobles  
strongly guarded ; also ROSA, FRA GIRO-  
LAMO, and others.*

Most guilty men ! standing yet o'ershadow'd  
By the shameful death yourselves have challenged,  
And from the contaminate offices  
Of public headsmen snatch'd but now—Traitors !  
What hinders that we strike not, even yet ?—  
Had ye of Milan or Ferrara been,  
Had D'Este or Visconti been your masters,  
Methinks as sharply as the thunder speaks  
To the lightning, th' axe had answer'd treason !—  
I say not this to glorify myself,  
God know'th, nor as 'twere 'gainst the scarlet of  
The Tyrant to set my own white garments.  
Mercy is as the angel of the Lord,  
And doth o'errule our spirits as He will !  
'Tis of my own poor self a thing apart ;  
I magnify it not, nay, nor your crime,

Whereof, having this night with tears and prayers  
Confess'd yourselves, ye yet may be absolv'd.  
If, then, ye all are contrite and are purg'd,  
Take oath of fealty, and ye shall see  
The scaffold and the lifted axe dissolve  
As though they had not been.—Holy Father! (*to the*  
Bishop-Legate),

I pray thee crown thy blessed work. [RIENZI *sits down*.

*Bish. (advancing).*

My Sons!

I conjure each one of ye, by those same  
Sacred rites wherein this night each of you  
Hath wash'd away his guilt and purg'd his soul,  
That from this hour, without rest or pause, ye  
Pledge yourselves to serve in Rome no other  
Ruler than the Tribune! Nay, but swear it,—  
Even here upon this sacred relic,  
A fragment of the Blessed Cross itself.—

*Mar.* Think you, Cerroni, they will purchase life  
By perjury?

*Cer.* You deem the oath already  
Brok'n? I also. Life is in the balance,  
And for such men, perjury, blasphemy,  
All the cardinal sins (and the Pope sin,  
If one there be!) would kick the beam!

*Ste. Col.*

Tribune

Rienzi, power is to-day with thee:  
The wind may veer to-morrow, and may blow  
To whom it list dominion. Vanquish'd

We are, and at thy mercy are our lives.  
That I thy death did compass, I deny.  
Yet will I take this oath which thou demand'st ;—  
Not that I cling with longing to the mast  
Of an old vessel, well-nigh submerg'd, but  
There are lives that I would save.

*Pie.*

Grandfather,

(*Aside*) Thou wilt not take this oath !

*Ste.*

Ay, boy, I will ;

Thou, too !

*Vil.* The old man carries it bravely !

*Cer.* Pity 'tis that he should be a Noble ;

He should have been one of the people !

*Gui. Ors.* To take this oath I am prepar'd.

*Sav.*

And I.

*Fran.* I likewise.

*Gian.* My father not refraining,

Wherefore should I hold back ?

*Nic. Ors.*

I also swear !

*Rien.* Ye are all brave men, that I knew, and proud.

Henceforth bestow on Rome that valour, and,

Sirs, be prouder yet that ye are Romans.

[*They all are sworn. Music during the swearing of the oath.*]

*Rien.* (*going to them*). Strike off their fetters ! Nay,  
I will myself

Release ye. (*Helps to free them.*) Whilst ye were  
bound, believe me,

Gentlemen, my hands too seem'd manacled.—  
So ye are free once more.—Illustrious  
Wearers of proud names! Rome bids ye live.  
Take courage, then, and link your hearts with mine  
To serve her only. Against such bulwark  
The world may dash itself in vain. I pray  
Of this night's work let no man henceforth speak.  
We have dream'd a dream wherein disorder'd  
Fancies chased each other until the dawn  
Scatter'd them! (*He motions to the attendants to with-  
draw the curtains.*) Behold! the sun is risen.  
Romans! my Friends! my Fellow-Counsellors!  
The day is bright with promise. Let us go.  
[*A march is played as they depart.*]

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Place of St. John Lateran. The Statue of the Horse of Marcus Aurelius in the background. A Festival is going on. People are merry-making.*

*Enter a Procession of Pilgrims, singing.*

## PILGRIMS' SONG.

How fast the summer days are fleeting !  
On swallows' wings they seem to fly ;  
They will not tarry for our greeting,  
As though pursu'd they hurry by.

Is it they hear the autumn warning,  
In murmur dim or whisper low?—  
Is it thus soon they see the morning  
Tinged with a richer, deeper glow?

Seasons on seasons hence are speeding—  
Soon winter darkens all the land ;  
Hour to hour, like waves succeeding,  
Hurry us further from the strand.

All earthly things are disappearing,  
The world its course well-nigh hath trod ;  
We Pilgrims, too, are hourly nearing  
Our home—the Paradise of God !  
[*The Pilgrims pass into the Church, singing.*

*Enter GAETANO and SCIARRA.*

*Gae.* Ere that we came to Rome and saw it with  
Our eyes, I had not deem'd his pow'r to have  
So deeply taken root. Why, Sciarra, from  
Clement's fingers seems as wholly parted  
As an escaped bird !

*Sci.* Yet, Count of Fondi,  
There be means, methinks, if not to lure Rome  
To Avignon again, to loose the grip  
Wherein Rienzi holds her.

*Gae.* Seems to me,  
Sciarra, that this "grip" doth more resemble  
An embrace, whereof on either side the  
Heart takes equal share. Never saw I State  
So orderly or so temperate, or  
Where Justice swoops with such sure swiftness down  
Upon the criminal. 'Tis clean transform'd,  
This city.

*Sci.* Ay, Count, things go fairly now.—

*Gae.* Fairly, say'st thou? 'Tis an Utopia ;  
I know not where 'tis vulnerable.

*Sci.* Count,  
Thou dost not know the Romans. Of all men  
Most inconstant ; loving change to such point  
That, though to the worse it hurried them, still  
They'd have it ! For the nonce they be well pleased :  
Beneath their vines they're waxing prosperous.  
Rienzi humours them, flatters them too,  
For all that they'll weary of him, likewise  
Of his taxes.

*Gae.* But thus the Pope thinks not,  
And seeks in other wise to circumvent  
The foe he hath himself created.—Yet how ?—

*Sci.* Count, by your favour. There is a weapon  
Forg'd to our hand—one, too, that rarely swerves.  
A charge of sorcery, Count ; not proclaim'd,  
Nor shouted on the housetop, but whisper'd.—  
Put about he hath the evil eye,—hint  
Later that 'tis rumour'd he doth practise  
Witchcraft, and that by such means the hearts of  
Men he foully doth purloin.—The common  
Herd is quick to heed such innuendo,  
Quicker still to echo them with most full  
And liberal shapement of their own. —

*Enter MARCO and VILLANI.*

But  
Who are these ? Methinks I know their faces.—  
*Gae.* One of them likewise should be known to me.

I will speak with them. (*To MARCO*) Sir, I crave pardon.

Did we not meet in Avignon? I'm sure  
Last winter that we met. Signor Marco  
Gaddi? Yes?

*Mar.* The same, Sir, at thy service.  
And thou the Count of Fondi—is't not so?

*Gae.* Sir, thy memory serves thee well.

*Mar.* May we  
Know the happy chance that brings ye hither?

*Gae.* No chance, Sir, but a fix'd desire to see  
The resurrection of a City.

*Mar.* 'Tis no fable. (*To VILLANI, aside*) Mark  
them, Villani, well;  
They are no friends.—(*To GAETANO*) Sir, by your  
leave, permit  
Me to make known to you this Gentleman,  
Signor Luca Villani, Burgher of  
This City.

*Gae.* I am glad to know thee, Sir.  
Let me to both present my friend, Signor  
Sciarra, likewise from Avignon.

[*VILLANI and SCIARRA retire apart and converse.*]

*Mar.* (*to GAETANO*) Sir, you  
Must command me in whatever service  
I may profit you. Yet I do fear me  
You will find our Rome starch'd somewhat and frill'd,  
After your gay sojourn in loose Avignon.



*Gae.* 'Tis not, it seemeth, one of your starch'd days !  
I find ye very revellers.

*Mar.* 'Tis a Festival to-day. The Tribune  
Loves to see the People merry.

*Gae.* He  
Hath your hearts, I'm sure of it.

*Mar.* You may be  
Sure of it, and will, when you have tarried  
Longer in our City, be more assured.

*Gae.* His ascent was wondrous sudden.

*Mar.* Rapid  
It was, yet not so sudden as to you  
At Avignon it may have seem'd. Things here  
Had long been ripening—growing rotten, too !

*Gae.* Ay ! to us at Avignon, in faith, it  
Wore the guise of magic. Dost thou know, Sir,  
That there 'tis half believ'd Rienzi hath  
A demon !

*Mar.* Demon ! How mean you ?

*Gae.* Is't not  
Also in Rome much bruited that he hath  
A sprite familiar that much aids him ?

*Mar.* Nay, Sir, such idle tales I know nought of.

*Gae.* Doubtless mere fountain-babble !

*Mar.* Will you walk ?

[*They go up.* VILLANI and SCIARRA come down.]

*Vil.* We have talk'd of Rome eno', Sir. Tell me  
Of Avignon. How speeds the Vessel there ?

Somewhat o'er-cardinal'd, with prelates crank ?

*Sci.* Nay, Sir, our Pastors benevolently  
The rovings of their flocks regard—being  
To all men (all women also) all things.  
Largely allow for human weaknesses ;  
Practise as they preach; a welcome gospel,  
Good fellowship and prodigality.

*Vil.* That doctrine hath a pagan savour. What  
Saith the Pope to it ?

*Sci.* The Pope ! Verily,  
The Holy Father leads the jolly crew.  
There's a twinkle in his eye at Matins  
As though the flavour of last night's jest were  
Still tickling him, and there's a gurgle in  
His benediction that doth smack of  
Purple Burgundy ! [*GAETANO and MARCO come down.*

*Mar.* Will it please you, Sirs,  
To come with us ? We can show you something  
Of old Rome ere that you do wait upon  
The Tribune.

*Gae.* At your service, Sir. Lead on.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.—*A room in the Capitol.*

*Enter CERRONI, ROSA, and CORNETO.*

*Cor.* How fares the Tribune? Know ye aught of him?

*Cer.* Proud as a new-created seraph, the  
First day he spreads his wings!

*Rosa.* More confident  
Than proud, methinks. He knows how high those  
wings

Will bear him. Proud! Hath he not done right well?

*Cer.* As thou wilt, Rosa, and all is right well,  
If to be immersed in schemes far-reaching  
As Bagdad, be for the common welfare!

*Cor.* The eagle's eye reflects a continent.—  
Rienzi soars; we cannot clip his wings.

*Cer.* He overlooks the dangers in our midst.  
E'en let him grapple first with these. This is  
No time for roseate fancies; no time  
For Carlovingian visions now.

Think ye that Charlemagne would have dallied  
Thus idly round about Marino's walls?

*Cor.* 'Tis true, I grant thee. 'Tis tough to digest  
That matter of Marino.

*Cer.* Rienzi  
Found it so. Think on't. For weeks our armies  
Heap'd up against Marino's walls, flouted

And defied by half our number. Meantime  
To the very gates of Rome harvest and  
Vineyard crush'd and ravag'd. The good old work  
All marr'd !

*Cor.* 'Twas ill-starr'd, all do know full well ;  
But 'twill right itself again. Rienzi  
Poorly was served. A most incapable  
Captain, that same Rinaldo Colonna,—  
Half-treacherous, too.

*Rosa.* The Tribune never  
Should have trusted him ; will not trust him more,  
Be sure oft. Yet make not too much of this.  
Sieges at the best, of our desires  
Fall short, from Troy to Zara ; and from this  
Marino fortress the wasps are driven.

*Cer.* To us what profit ? An empty wasp-nest !  
Upon some other crag they'll swarm again.—

*Cor.* Well, next time we'll have them out, and finish  
With them utterly.

*Rosa.* See, the Tribune comes.

*Cor.* Let us withdraw. He's deep in thought.  
This way.— [*They retire to the back.*]

*Enter RIENZI in deep thought.*

*Rien.* "To Cæsar render that to Cæsar due !"—  
Good, if I be Cæsar ! But to a Pope,  
That shuns our city as a pestilence,  
A wilful exile, tribute shall we pay ?

What charter sets him free of all our lands,  
Gives him a right to tax ; to amputate  
Our scant earnings, sore-wrestled for, God know'th !—  
Bishop of Rome ? Ay, doubtless, and to him,  
Heaven's vicegerent, should be given much ;  
But of our free gift—St. Peter's Pence ? Ay,  
Though they to Clement's ducats be swollen,—  
Them no man doth withhold. But these taxes  
Trouble as sand within the teeth. Peter's  
Descendant ! Not wide enough for him the  
Spiritual realm, but he must brandish  
In his Jove-like hands an hundred sceptres  
O'er the Universe ! Nay, the time is ripe  
That he did cease, poising on his shoulders  
Thus the burden of two worlds, Atlas to  
Outface ! (*Turning, he sees CORNETO, CERRONI, and*  
*ROSA, who advance.*) Your pardon, Gentle-  
men. My eyes  
Were with my thoughts, and they were travellers  
Leagues abroad.—Ye do know that Martin,—he  
Of Puerto,—captured hath been ?

*Cer.*

We did

Learn of't from Lulli, himself the captor.

*Rien.* Ay, 'twas Giulio, ever the foremost  
Of the forward ! Danger he heeds no more  
Than larks mind rain. But of this Prisoner  
What saith the public voice ?

*Cer.*

The People

Clamour for swift fulfilment of the law.

*Rien.* Forthwith he dies! Let them be satisfied.

*Cer.* Thy warrant, Tribune.

*Rien.* Thou dost fear me, friend?

Dost thou not know I have a brother to

Avenge! (*Sits at table and writes.*) Rosa, this warrant  
instantly

Bear to the Prefect. — (*Gives warrant to ROSA.*

*Exeunt ROSA, CORNETO, and CERRONI.*) At  
length, my brother!—

*Enter FRANCESCA.*

*Rien.* Whence art thou, Francesca?

*Fran.* From Lateran,

My husband. There all the cunning of our

Roman artists labours in an hundred

Shapes,—banners and wreaths, arches of triumph,

Trophies and scrolls, wherewith fitly to grace

Thy new knighthood. Thou hold'st thy purpose still?

*Rien.* Assuredly, Francesca! wherefore not?

*Fran.* I fear, Cola—I fear I know not what!

*Rien.* How, Francesca? What is't affrights thee  
now?

Are we safe guarded not? Around us shines

A panoply of steel. On us attend

Most trusty guards—no mere hirelings they!

*Fran.* But it is thy greatness—well, if thou wilt,  
Our greatness! That is it makes me tremble.

He that is great stands forth above the crowd,  
The better mark for jealousy to strike!—  
Cola, 'tis thou alone that bearest up  
This people; thyself remov'd, thine own  
And new-created sphere, shiver'd like glass,  
Falls back to chaos! Yea, I do confess  
All things affright me, whether the rabble  
In festal triumph or for justice shout;—  
The blare of trumpet and the roll of drum,  
The blaze of feasts, of shows, distress me all!  
Ay, in the very calm of night that reigns  
Of late, I seem a coming storm to hear.

*Rien.* Thou dost not well, Francesca, thus to make  
Of peaceful nights and placid stars drudges  
To bear the load of thy misgivings, nor  
Is't now to scare thyself with fantasies.  
Each sun that rises, through the sphere ourselves  
Have fashion'd, doth new vigour shoot. 'Tis  
Firm, believe me. Rest thee content, my wife.

*Fran.* 'Tis not hurt to the State, but to thyself,  
That I do fear, my Cola.

*Rien.* Then be thy  
Fears allay'd, Francesca. (*Showing a coat of mail  
beneath his cloak.*) Behold me girt  
About in trusty mail; a masterpiece  
Of old Mancini! Th' adventurous hand  
That strikes at me thro' this should wield indeed  
A magic blade! Art thou not satisfied?—

*Fran.* An thou wilt wear it, Cola, night and day.

*Rien.* If so thy spirit may be calm'd, I will  
Thus wear it. Come, Francesca.

[RIENZI and FRANCESCA are about to quit the scene.

*Enter* TRISTAN.

What, Tristan ?

*Tris.* Your pardon, Tribune. There be two noble  
Ladies that with your most honor'd Consort  
Do crave immediate speech.

*Rien.* How ! Noble  
Ladies, say'st thou, Tristan ? How know'st thou that ?

*Tris.* Their speech no less than their attendance so  
Denote.

*Rien.* On what matter come they, Tristan ?

*Tris.* Nor of their business nor their titles  
Would they impart, either withholding (thus  
Did they deliver) for thine ear alone (*to* FRANCESCA).

*Fran.* 'Tis some petition. My influence  
They do o'er-estimate, whate'er it be,  
What say'st thou, Cola ?

*Rien.* These being noble,  
Needs must be some sharp and sudden blast of  
Unkind fortune that to our shunn'd dwelling,  
Hither doth blow them. Francesca, see them.

*Fran.* Wilt thou not stay, Cola ?—

*Tris.* —Pardon, Madam.  
Thy sole presence most earnestly they crave.



*Fran.* What should I say to them, Cola?

*Rien.* What! I

Know not what may be their errand. Thou'lt be  
Kind and gentle with them, whate'er they ask,  
That do I know. Only be not too kind.  
Be mindful, should they in such wise plead, that  
In Rome there is no voice, no tongue, nor thine,  
Nor of the angels, that can avert from  
One blood-guilty head the retributive  
Axe. So have I sworn, and on th' Altar seal'd  
My vow!

*Fran.* I will not see these Ladies.

*Rien.* It

Is too late, my Wife; they be here. Be firm,  
Francesca. Tristan, come.—

[*Exeunt RIENZI and TRISTAN.*]

*Enter from the centre Countess TERESA ORSINI and  
BIANCA ORSINI. Both are in black and veiled.—*

*A pause.*

*Fran.* If it be true,  
Illustrious Ladies, that ye do seek  
Francesca, wife to the Tribune, 'tis she  
That awaits your pleasure.—I pray ye speak!—  
Will ye not sit?

*Ter.* Your pardon, Madam. Kneel  
Should we rather, being suppliants.

*Fran.* I  
Pray thee, Lady, mock me not. Such homage

Keep for Monarchs. Though to Rienzi Wife,  
Lowly I am, needing loyal kindness  
Only, not servility. Your pleasure?

*Ter.* O Madam, 'tis thine aid! For thee to grant  
It nothing; for us two mourning women  
Everything. Pardon for one Condemn'd!

*Fran.* Pardon! Alas! from these poor hands such  
large  
Issue go'th not forth.

*Ter.* Thy voice is potent,  
Madam, with the Tribune. One word from thee,  
My son shall live.

*Fran.* Thy son?

*Ter.* 'Tis true, Madam.  
Thou art a mother. Bethink thee, then, hadst  
Thou a child doom'd to a felon's death!

*Fran.* What!  
O misery!

*Ter.* My son! and this his wife.

[Designating BIANCA.

*Fran.* O most unhappy Ladies!

*Bian.* Unhappy!  
Yet, Madam, thou couldst make our happiness.

*Fran.* How is thy husband named, and what his  
crime?

*Bian.* Martin Puerto!—

*Fran.* Martin Puerto!  
He? Alas! ye do ask a miracle.

In that he is Noble, foredoom'd he stands ;  
Being an Orsini—I weep to say it—  
He is twice condemn'd. Had he ten lives they  
Were forfeit all !

*Ter.* And hast thou the heart to  
Say so, Madam ? Thou art merciless !

*Fran.* No,  
Lady, merciless I were, bade I you  
A gleam of light behold where I see none.  
*Bian.* Thou art both wife and mother. Canst thou  
say

Nothing that may move the Tribune ?

*Fran.* What ! Move  
Rienzi ? Must I, then, say it ? Martin  
Orsini with his own hand the Tribune's  
Brother slew ! Forgive me—Rienzi is  
But made of clay. I pray your leave to go.

*Ter.* I do entreat thee stay awhile. Dost say  
'Twas Martin's hand that dealt the fatal blow ?  
O, believe it not ! Never were there proofs.

*Bian.* 'Twas vilest calumny ! My husband was  
Surrounded, which his soldiers seeing,  
They desperately struck through to clear his  
Path, and, alas ! thy brother fell.

*Ter.* Most sad,  
Madam, yet in war we have such fortunes  
To endure.

*Fran.* What, Lady ! hear I rightly ?

Fortune of war? An unarm'd boy! Good sooth!  
Is this a balm for our still open wounds?—  
Ye do plead to me of lives whereon ye  
Set much store, of heads most dear to ye both,  
In that th' axe hangs imminent the dearer;  
We, too, of lives welded in ours somewhat  
Have known, yet for that they seem'd to you to  
Mar the daily smoothness of your footfall,  
Were from your path as sharply swept as though  
They had been beetles!

*Ter.* I fear me, Madam,  
That your husband doth of private grievance  
Make a public wrong.

*Fran.* No, Madam, I do  
Call the Saints to witness that the Tribune  
Doth not so! What! is the wanton slitting  
Of a throat mere matter 'twixt the slayer  
And the slain? Had an Orsini died, far  
Other answer had ye made. But so is't.  
The cruel bolt that on some cottage falls,  
Only the poor and lowly being struck,  
Awakes no tear, flutters your eyelids not;  
But if it scorch some golden roof of yours,  
Electric sense of horror thrills thro' your  
Marrow! Then for you the world is shapeless.

*Bian.* O! Madam, if then in your eyes we may,  
Perchance, have seem'd in other days lightly  
To have glanc'd on those that walk'd beneath us,

From your proud height look upon us abas'd,  
Remembering what we were with pity.  
Thou dost not wish my husband's death?

*Fran.*

My heart

Is not so stony. Not to living man  
Do I wish pain, nor injury, nor harm ;  
Neither to any woman, Madam. Yet  
What are my wishes, gentle or cruel ?  
I have no pow'r at all.

*Ter.*

Yet pow'r thou hast,

And greatly with thy husband canst prevail.

*Fran.* None now, I fear me. Since that the Nobles  
Bade him defiance from Marino's walls,  
I think the Tribune's very face hath chang'd.  
Each hour there, as on a sun-dial, leaves  
A shadow.

*Bian.* Alas ! canst thou say nothing ?

*Fran.* I can say everything, and yet 'tis  
Nothing being said, for my breath no more  
Will move the Tribune than 'twill th' Apennines.

*Ter.* O that I could see him ! A mother's love,  
Like faith, can uproot mountains.

*Bian.*

I am sure

The Tribune doth not need the death of one  
So small. His greatness doth demand it not.  
Whose sentence there my husband can condemn ?

*Fran.* Alas ! it is of the People ; them  
The Tribune dares not to withstand.

*Ter.* Dares not  
The great Tribune ! Fears *he* the People ?  
Why, the king of beasts, if with steady gaze  
You do confront him, quails. Much rather, then,  
The beast of many heads, being withstood,  
Recoils.—I know your husband fears them not.—

*[The great bell of the Capitol is heard to toll.  
A pause, whilst the three ladies gaze at each  
other affrighted. COUNTESS TERESA hurries  
to the big window at the back of the stage.]*

*Bian.* Speak, Madam, speak. That bell—what  
bodes that sound ?

*Fran.* Alas ! but ill, unhappy Ladies. It  
Is too late ! it is too late !

*Ter.* What say'st thou ?  
What words are these ?

*Fran.* 'Tis the funeral knell  
Of one condemn'd to die.

*Bian.* My husband ! What ?  
No ; 'tis not possible. They would not dare !  
Thou dost not think so ? O, stay them, Madam !  
Thou canst do somewhat—only do something.  
Art thou dumb—motionless ? This is fiends' work !  
In love of God ! mother, ask her to speak.  
O ! I shall go mad !

*Countess Ter. (at the window, where she has been  
during the preceding words).* No, no, my  
daughter ;

Thou art wrong. Mistaken are ye both. There  
Is a crowd beneath—a surging, merry  
Concourse. 'Tis some festive gathering. Now  
They are mounting up the steps and laughing.  
This is no execution; and yet  
Certain that doleful iron tongue discords  
With merriment. Why doth the people  
So throng upward? This window checks me. I  
Would see further.—That column hides them!—

*Fran.*

Seek

To know no more. Prithee! leave that window.

*Bian.* Thou hast put me on the rack! Thou dost  
know

For whom that clamorous note is sounding.  
Each dreadful stroke doth seem to measure out  
A drop of human blood! It weighs upon  
My heart, transforming that to iron.—She  
Will not answer me. Speak to her, mother!

[*Goes up. The bell ceases.*]

*Ter. (at the window).* O, joy! That frightful din  
hath ceased at last.

*Bian.* Praise to the saints! 'Tis most blessed  
silence.

*Ter. (up).* 'Tis as the peace that doth with twilight  
fall;—

Yet 'tis strange, too—so great a concourse there  
And scarce a voice. Those whom I see all seem  
To bend and strain their necks with one accord;

But what they gaze at with such earnestness,  
I know not, nor can guess.—

*Bian.* Cease, mother, cease !

Our fingers cannot move these stones ; our eyes  
Cannot pierce these walls, no more than our words  
Can touch men's hearts, or women's either. No,  
Whate'er be doing there beyond these walls,  
Whate'er be done, I know that Martin lives !  
For us remains one thing only—to see  
The Tribune, and that instantly.—

*Enter GIULIO LULLI.*

O, Sir,

You are timely come. Pray you pardon me,  
Nor ask question of unhappiness.  
We must see the Tribune. 'Tis life and death !

*Fran.* Giulio, thou seest on what sad errand  
These most unhappy Ladies come. Think'st thou  
The Tribune will be seen ?

*Giu.* He hath gone forth.

*Fran.* And when returns ?

*Giu.* Not till the morrow ; so

He bade me say. To St. Nicholas' Church  
He hath beta'en himself, there to seek rest  
Until the hour appointed for his march  
To Lateran. Thou know'st that the Tribune  
Gladly avoids the Capitol, whene'er  
Justice is dealt out to criminals.



*Bian.*

I

Pray thee, Sir, briefly to speak out. Whose doom  
But now that dolorous bell proclaim'd?

*Giu.*

I

Do trust, Madam, no friend to thee or thine.  
Martin Puerto.

*Bian.*

Martin! O Heaven!

*[Falls senseless into the arms of TERESA.]**Fran.* Alas! look to the lady, Giulio!

Alas! what hast thou done?

*Giu.*

Thou dost not mean——

*Fran.* Ay, 'tis his wife, Martin Puerto's wife.*Giu.* Then is it past all cure.

*Ter.* (*approaching* FRANCESCA). Past cure it is,  
But not past punishment! Be sure of it,  
It will come speedily! O! to be so  
Cruel! Butcher'd the while that we did plead  
For mercy! Shame! Tigers had been less swift,  
O! i' the hour of your need may it thus to  
You and yours be meted out!

*Fran.*

God forgive

Thee, Lady, and give measure to thy grief!

*Bian.* (*regaining consciousness*). Let us forth; this  
is a tomb!

*Fran.*

Giulio,

Befriend these Ladies. Convey them gently;  
Their servants wait below.

*Giu.*

Trust them to me.

*Ter.* (to FRANCESCA, whom she approaches). O,  
thou shalt soon learn, blood makes but sorry  
Lime to build with. Thy house—O doubt it not!—  
Though slight and feeble as a house of cards,  
Will suffice, as though 'twere Samson's pillars,  
To crush thee and thy mushroom splendours! Feast  
In the sound of funeral bells meantime;—  
Pursue your pastime till your own knell ring,  
And your weird fortunes vanish as they rose,  
Like smoke from witches' cauldrons!

*Bian.*

Mother, I

Entreat you, come away; my brain's afire!

*Ter.* Ay, my poor widow'd one, to our dark hearth,  
Despoil'd and ravag'd of the life that warm'd.—  
What fiends these upstarts are! Ay, daughter mine,  
Come, let us leave this Golgotha! Lean close  
On me. Nay, daughter, close. I am more strong  
Than thou. (To GIULIO) No, Sir, approach not,  
neither thou

Nor any man that holds him friendly to  
The fortunes of this fell abode. There are  
Those below that wait upon us. Daughter,  
We shall weep anon, yea, our poor lives through.  
Thou, too, Madam, shalt bewail this day's black work!

[*Exeunt TERESA and BIANCA.*]

*Fran.* Alas, poor sufferers! your griefs be great.  
Your bitter words no bitterness in me  
Arouse. Your lot is pitiful. Pray Heav'n

Temper it to you ! Greatness also is  
A burden grievous to be borne. We were  
Happier, Giulio, in those bygone  
Days when we were lowly. What misery  
This greatness is ! Lend me thine arm. Let's hence !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Place in Rome.*

*Enter CONTI and MALATESTA.*

*Con.* By my faith, Ugo, but no potentate  
Cradled in the purple could with the axe  
More nimble be than our Rienzi ! King  
Tarquin cleaving down his poppies stands mock'd.

*Mal.* What would you have, my friend ? In  
politics

You must mow widely, with long scythes. Now, I  
Both Tarquin and Rienzi do commend.

*Con.* Politic dost call it ? An Orsini,  
Senator once, nephew to Cardinals,  
Allied to half our noble houses, and  
Rienzi sweeps him from the board as tho'  
He were the merest pawn ! I am right sure  
The Pope will be greatly wroth.

*Mal.* Well ! and the  
People much rejoiced. Jubilant I  
Myself beheld them as the axe did fall,  
Making of roystering Martin "finis."

What of offended popes, so that content  
And pacified you keep the people !  
“ Panem et circenses ”—you know the rest.  
Read for “ circenses ” executions !

*Con.* Alas, poor Martin ! And you saw him die ?  
I'll warrant that he bore him nobly.

*Mal.*

Ay !

On those of us his friends that about the  
Prison door did stand to bid God-speed, he  
Smil'd, bowing his head, and then his eyes swept  
The horizon, and to the rising sun  
He said, or seem'd to say, “ Farewell ! ” But on  
The mob that sway'd and jeer'd and thrust near his  
Their ill-bred faces, Puerto cast no  
Glance at all.

*Con.* Brave ! brave ! A brigand, certain,  
But a brave one. 'Tis the Noble only  
That can show you how to die unquaking.  
Well, some way we have all to yield the ghost.

*Mal.* Most true, Conti, but let us keep off death  
At long arm's length, as long as possible !

*Enter Citizens. Women and Children on their way  
to St. John's in Lateran.*

*1st Cit.* Yea, I will ask these gentlemen. Your-  
selves  
Shall hear their answer.

*2nd. Cit.*

Tut ! How should they know ?

Yet let me speak, Lorenzo ; foolishness  
To question in such wise ! Well ! well, go  
And put it to them roundly, an thou canst.

*1st Cit.* Marry ! I can and will this matter touch.—  
Wherefore not ?—'Tis “yea ” or “nay,”——

*2nd Cit.* To it, man !

Resolve thy “yea ” or “nay.” Go forward—now.

*1st Cit.* (*crosses himself and hesitating*).

*2nd Cit.* Why, what's in the wind now ? What art  
fearing ?

Art ent'ring the Witches' cavern ?

*1st Cit.* Magic !

Antonio—sorcery ! Did we not  
But now of practices converse ?

*2nd Cit.* O, thou

Unstable one ! Is't not broad daylight, and  
Talk'st of “practices ” as tho' Satanas  
Were at thy elbow ! Give place, Lorenzo.—

[CONTI *and* MALATESTA *advance*.

*Con.* God be with ye, friend. Why, how thou dost  
bend

Thy brows upon us, as though wert seeking  
Something or some one at our hands !

*2nd Cit.* Gentle

Sirs, your pardon ! 'Tis true we did revolve  
Whether to ask or not to ask of you,—  
This weak Lorenzo here——

*Con.* Well, to the point,

My friend. An thou wilt catechize, say on.

*2nd Cit.* By my faith, ye are kind gentlemen. 'Tis Briefly thus. 'Tis noised abroad (myself Believing not) that our noble and great Tribune——

*1st Cit. (crosses himself).* Ay, by the Mass it is !

*2nd Cit.* Peace, man !

Peace ! or tell the tale thyself. Your pardon,  
Gentle Sirs. I say 'tis whisper'd——

*1st Cit.*

Nay ! nay !

'Tis whisper'd not ; 'tis so asserted——

*2nd Cit.*

Wilt

Thou hold upon thy tongue these gentlemen  
Like sheep caught by a bramble ! Sirs, forgive  
The figure ; but 'tis a foolish fellow,  
This poor Lorenzo, blindly breaking in,  
He knows not where, like a half-waken'd goat.

*Mal.* Come, thy question, worthy citizen.

*2nd Cit.* I say 'tis whisper'd that our Rienzi  
Hath with the Devil dealings—there it is !

*1st Cit. (crosses himself).* Saints protect us ! Ay,  
they say so. Likewise

They talk of a familiar spirit  
That doth abide with him—ay ! a crooked  
Spirit that in the cross itself that tops  
His sceptre hath its dwelling-place.

*Con.*

How, how ?

An ill spirit inhabiting a cross !

Go to, my friend, they mock thee.

*2nd Cit.*

Idle man !

Did I not tell thee so ? Wise gentlemen,

I did predict your answer thus would be.

Why, feeble one ! ill spirits dread a cross.

[*All laugh and jeer.*

*1st Cit.* I tell thee all, young Rossi says that he

Hath heard the spirit squeak !

[*All laugh.*

*Mal.*

Thou'rt merry, friend.

Away with ye to Lateran, and haste ;

The Tribune will be knighted ere ye move.

What, with holiest rites he goes to take

His place 'mongst Paladins and saints, the while

Ye idly smirch his name with sorceries !

O ingrates ! who was it heard the evil

Spirit squeak ? Thou, was it, simpleton ! O

Credulous, stiff-neck'd generation !

Go, and see ye mend your ways. Depart, and

Keep an eye upon the Tribune's sceptre !

[*The People exeunt, laughing and hustling good-humouredly the 1st Citizen.*

*Mal.* Thus they go, Children of Ignorance, Slaves

To their fears, believing what they fear, and

Fearing their beliefs ! No prophet am I,

But this will see the world out. Faith in the

Devil will outlast all creeds. What, Conti ?

*Con.* No doubt on't, no doubt at all. But 'twere  
time



We did to Lateran repair. Thou shalt,  
Malatesta, as we go deliver  
Further. I like thy prophecies.

*Mal.*

Ay, ay ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Place St. John of Lateran. A crowd  
of people and armed men. A festival proceeding.  
The riderless statue of the horse of MARCUS  
AURELIUS at the back, wreathed with garlands.*

*Enter* MARCO, CERRONI, ROSA, and VILLANI, with  
GAETANO and SCIARRA.

*Gae.* Happy Rome and happy Romans, making  
Merry ever !

*Cer.* Therein to any man  
Small profit.

*Mar.* Dost grudge their new-found pastimes ?  
Wouldst have us all wear doleful visages,  
Cerroni ? Be cheerful likewise, man !

*Cer.* I  
Such empty mummeries love not. Time was  
The Romans, when the Victory was won,  
Did triumph. Rienzi, ere that he hath  
Crush'd the public foe, high revel holds  
And wreathes his brows with laurels.

*Vil.* Yea ! What irks  
It if the people love such pageants ?  
They do not need a reason for their feasts.



*Cer.* They'll need a score when they are bid to pay.

*Vil.* Pshaw! The Treasury overflows. Thus much Sacchi can tell thee.

*Rosa.* Do not vex thyself,  
*Cerroni.* Thou'rt over-nice, methinks, to  
Calculate the reckoning. 'Tis not in  
Thy pocket that we search for means to  
Satisfy the cost.

*Mar.* Nay, good friends, we show  
Scant courtesy to these our friends. They do  
Weary of such barren talk.

*Gae.* Not so, good  
Friends. 'Tis to the purpose much.

*Rosa.* Your pardon,  
Count of Fondi. The Tribune bade me say,  
The Ceremony over, he gladly  
Will receive ye both.

*Gar.* At your leisure, Sir.

*[A march is played. Enter from the church  
a procession. Priests, Monks, Acolytes;  
then Heralds and Soldiers; finally RIENZI,  
armed and crowned with the sevenfold crown  
of the Knighthood of the Holy Ghost, with  
the BISHOP-LEGATE OF ORVIETO.]*

*Rien. (advancing).* Methinks 'tis even now that I  
do touch  
The topmost fruit of my desires. Here  
On this day I seem to feel towards me

Stretch'd the strong arm of the Lord, and I seem  
To reach His fingers. Some voice within me  
(Be it of conscience or of the Lord,  
Mayhap not differing) utters these words,  
"I am well pleased with thee, My son." Herein  
I do not vaunt myself, nor doth one vein  
In all my body swell the bigger.

*Bish.*

Thy

Heart is single, Cola Rienzi, and  
If, as I think, no taint of arrogance  
Runs counter to its purity, and if  
The sudden and unguess'd greatness whereto  
Thou hast been summon'd, doth dazzle not  
Thy lofty aim, then may'st thou believe that  
Inward voice to be the voice of Heaven.

*Rien.* Seems to me, Bishop, that in this place we  
Do become transform'd, and do feed upon  
Some purer air, and do breathe the breath of  
Heroes!—Not in this place, my countrymen,  
Should paltry act of ours dare write itself  
(Like Goth or Noble hacking at temples)  
Athwart the imperishable vast record  
Of Roman greatness. Heroes have been here.  
(I know there be some yet.) The air is bright  
With memories. Great thoughts, great actions,  
Hence have stirr'd the pulses of the world. Saints  
Too, have trod where we do stand (please Heav'n there  
Be some yet!). This day the Past seems to be

No Past, but warm and quick and near to us  
As the Present. After our long vigil  
I am something faint. Thou too, my Father,  
Hast much fasted. What more awaits us,—what ?

*Vil. (advances).* The Envoys, Tribune, do attend.

Wilt thou

Receive them here ? Didst thou not order so ?

*Rien.* 'Tis true, Villani ; methinks mine eyes met  
Theirs as we came forth. Give them admittance.

[*Vilani retires to bring forward* GAETANO *and*

SCIARRA.

*Rien.* Ye are most welcome, Gentlemen, to Rome.  
How fares his Holiness ?

*Gae.*

Th' Holy Father's

Health hath ne'er been better, albeit, as  
The Tribune knoweth, the weight of all the  
Churches doth on him press unceasingly.

*Rien.* Sir, that burden is by Heaven imposed ;  
Yet other cares there be, seeming in earth  
Rather than in heaven to root themselves,  
Whereof, did it so please his Holiness  
Himself to disembarass, 'tis believ'd  
By many men, clear-sighted too, the Church  
Would hold to her blessèd course, less hinder'd.

*Gae.* We know, Sir Tribune, such there be who thus  
Presumptuously have thought ; likewise have  
Forward been to settle and confine the  
Bounds wherein the Papal power should move.

The Pope's own Officer, thou art not one  
Of these the Pope would fain believe.

*Rien.* Th' Holy

Father doth not deceive himself. Foremost  
Shall find me ever to maintain his rights.

"To Cæsar render that to Cæsar due"—

'Tis the word of Christ Himself. Is't not so?

*Sci.* Ay, Sir. Yet the Pope misgives that even  
In this palace design there be to shear  
His temporal dignities.

*Rien.* Your pardon!

In bygone days the Holy Father did  
Refuse to hold one dignity at least  
Proffer'd by our people. 'Twas the post  
Of Senator of Rome, the which they did  
Confer upon him, not as Pope Clement,  
But as Roger of Limoges. Whence claims he,  
Then, the rank of Roman King, either on  
Charles or Lewis to confer, I being  
Tribune?

*Gae.* Pardon, Sir Tribune, yet art thou  
The Pope's Lieutenant, not his Suzerain.

*Rien.* Thou'rt bold, my Lord! No words nor acts  
of mine

Canst thou so stretch. I call both thee and all  
This concourse of true men to witness here,  
We Romans seek but our own, which, having  
Found, thereon will keep firm grip! Thereby not

Clipping our due homage to the Pontiff.

*Gae.* Full well we know, Sir, that with this answer  
The Holy Father will have nought. I pray  
Thee, Sir, a little lower pitch thy tone,  
Nor thus break off from Avignon.

*Rien.*

Break off!

Who, Count, of severance spake? What, break off!  
God's light! With rivets indissoluble  
I here before ye all fetter my soul;  
All spiritual faculties of mine  
In willing bondage wholly submitting,  
And lay my spiritual part ungrudged  
To be the mere footstool of the Pontiff,  
If so he will. To all the Pope may seal  
As Gospel with shut eyes I do subscribe;  
Whom he may bless, I too will bless! Whom he  
May wither with his curse, though from my hearth,  
I utterly cast out! Be his to bind or loose.—  
Yea, let him spurn me, my homage knows nor  
Stint nor scope. Christ excepted, Clement be  
My road to Heaven!

*Gae.*

Why, this, Sir Tribune,  
Mightily becomes thee, and may Heaven  
In such noble servitude preserve thee!

*Rien.* Ay, Count, thus much for myself—Rienzi,—  
But a mere earthworm.—But for the Tribune,—  
The Elect of Romans, I acknowledge  
No supremacy!

*Gae.* Thy speech, I pray thee,  
E'en at this point arrest. Excellently  
Well hast thou in this brave presence utter'd.  
Further to speak now were to unsay all.

*Sci.* Ay! even so, Tribune, nor strike one note  
Discordant. Soft touches soothed our ears. Let  
Us, whilst we may, to Avignon report  
Such gracious utterance.

*Gae.* Even so.  
'Twere best, Sir Tribune, that we did withdraw.—  
*Rien.* A moment, Sirs. Yet must I entreat your  
Patience. Report me truly. Not for  
Thrones nor principalities would I give  
Yourselves or others warrant me to express  
By one hair's weight other than I am. No  
Image blurr'd, distorted, shall ye take of me  
To Avignon. Gave I but half my mind  
To ye, ye Envoys, 'twere to lie wholly.  
Therefore I, speaking for the Romans, claim  
For the Romans their lawful heritage!  
From self-appointed stewards I demand  
Account of all their stewardship. Further  
I demand of Lewis and of Charles, whom  
We do summon to our tribunal here,  
Wherefore with rude and mailèd hands they dare  
The Sacred Charter of our rights usurp.  
Likewise of the Electors we demand  
On what pretence they give what is not theirs,

Even our Rome, filching our rights from us.  
Yet more, remembering whose is the trust  
That I do hold and what I represent,  
I call on our Spiritual Pastor,  
The most Holy Father, together with  
The Sacred College of the Cardinals,  
To return to Rome. To all the corners  
Of the earth I call and do claim for Rome  
Her old Dominion! (*Draws his sword and brandishes  
it to the points of the compass.*) This by her right  
Is mine, and this, and this! [*The People cheer.*  
*Bish.* —Rienzi, stay !

This goes beyond thy meaning, son.

*Rien.* But by  
Heaven's light, my Father, not so! 'Twere time  
That I spake loudly. We were devour'd else.

*Bish. (to the Envoys).* A little tarry yet. This  
matter time

Will mend. (Long vigil hath the Tribune's brain  
Somewhat o'er-master'd.) Softly, Rienzi!  
Too roughly hast thou carried it.

*Rien.* Not so,  
Bishop. All hath been deeply consider'd.  
Not to 'scape burning would I aught unsay!—  
The Ceremony is over. Farewell,  
My friends. Lulli, give these all honour as  
Doth befit their noble office, likewise  
The sacred person of the sender. Peace.

(*To the Bishop, who endeavours to remonstrate*) Reverend

Legate, what is done is done !

Music strike up. Beat drums, and trumpets speak !

Forward to the Capitol. Come, my friends !

[*Martial music. The People cheer as RIENZI  
and the concourse set forth. The Bishop  
and the Envoys converse apart.*]

SCENE V.—*The rebel camp at Tivoli. Soldiers playing with dice.*

*Enter* GIANNA COLONNA, STEFANELLO, FRANGIPANI,  
*and others.*

*Gian.* 'Tis time we heard from Rome.

*Fran.* Our messenger  
May have been captured by the enemy ;  
Rienzi's scouts are vigilant.

*Gian.* Methinks,  
Count, less alert than they were wont to be.  
They underestimate our strength, and think  
We dare not in the city close with them ;  
They shall know better shortly.

*Stef.* When go we  
Forward, Gianni ?

*Gian.* To-morrow, as I think.  
We but await report. The messenger  
Should be here anon.



*Enter SAVELLI and PIETRO COLONNA.*

*Sav.* Gianni, is there news  
Of Pepin, Count of Minorbino?

*Gian.* Hast  
Thou not heard then? Pepin is encamp'd at  
Palestrina with two thousand men. He  
Attacks the Maggiore Gate, whilst we  
Make for the Gate of San Lorenzo.

*Sav.* This  
Is good news. The Count of Minorbino  
Is in himself a host.

*Enter Messenger.*

*Gian.* Quickly report.—  
We fear'd thou hadst been ta'en.

*Mes.* 'Tis perilous  
Work, eluding guards and scouts!

*Gian.* They are roused  
Then? They expect us?

*Mes.* The guards are doubled,  
Yet there's not much stir. Rome is tranquil.

*Gian.* Saints  
Keep her so, until at our own girdles  
We wear the keys of ev'ry gate of her!

*Sav.* But they know us gather'd here. Do they not  
Sleep in arms?—

*Mes.* There is more talk of revel

Than of fighting. Yet do I not think, most  
Noble, that ye are like to come upon  
Them unawares.

*Gian.* What talk they of in Rome?

*Mes.* The Tribune; always of the Tribune!

*Sav.* The  
Theme grows stale. We'll give them newer matter.  
What more?

*Mes.* Doubtless, ill news travelling fast,  
Ye have heard of Count Martin's death.

*Sav.* Martin  
Puorto dead! How, where, and when?

*Mes.* Upon  
The scaffold. 'Tis but three days since.

*Gian.* So! He  
Was a turbulent fellow, likewise an  
Orsini. Yet am I sorry—i' faith,  
Most sorry.

*Sav.* The Upstart grows exceeding  
Daring, and holds the blood of Tarquin but  
As mere ditch-water. 'Twere time we stay'd the  
Madman's hand, or we shall hear of wilder  
Pranks.

*Gian.* Corsi is in the City. Spake you  
With him?

*Mes.* He is most closely watch'd, but he  
Hath large following, and if at any  
Point fortune should favour us, you will find

Him ready to push home.

*Gian.* Good. (*To an Officer*) Instantly  
Ride to Palestrina. Inform the Count  
Of Minorbino that we prepare to  
March at cockcrow (according to our plan).  
Nay, you shall have it all writ fair. Come to  
My tent. Have all in readiness, my friends.  
We shall sup in Rome to-morrow, Nobles !

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE VI.—*The Walls of Rome. The Gate of San Lorenzo.* GIULIO LULLI, Soldiers, and Citizens upon the ramparts. A Guard at the gate. Peasants, Water-carriers, and Herdsmen enter hurriedly through the gate as though in flight.

*Beppo* (*a Peasant*). They are upon us ! Friends !  
Quick, save yourselves !

*Giu.* (*catches hold of BEPPO*). Tarry, my friend.  
Art thou not safe enough

Within Rome's walls ? Whither wouldst have us fly ?  
Needs must it be a host that drives ye all  
At such a pace !

*Bep.* Host ! May'st well say "host." Ten  
Thousand, as I live——

*Giu.* But a scurvy "ten" !  
Wherefore not fifty thousand. When thou dost  
Lie, fellow, see that thou dost it roundly !

Thou didst reckon closely, I will warrant !

*Bep.* Nay, not so closely neither. Yet was it  
Close enough.

*Giu.* Come, be not so chary, man !  
The leader, who ?—Of horse or foot ?—What force ?

*Bep.* Exceeding great of both, I'm sure. The  
dust——

*Giu.* Dust, man—dust ! Maybe flocks of goats or  
geese,—

Or the monks of San Lorenzo, tramping  
Betimes to snatch the morning air. Maybe  
Some strolling players journeying Romewards  
From Ravenna ; or market-folk ; or e'en  
Rienzi's own scouts ; or—— The devil take  
Thee and thy dust ! Thou'lt be dust and shortly,  
So thou thy panic-open mouth close not !

*Bep.* Be not so wroth with us, brave Sir, we be  
But simple peasants.—

*Giu.* But simple peasants,  
Simpleton ! should stout hearts have, or, in the  
Name of all the prophets, what profits your  
Simplicity ? Go, get thee drink. Into [*Gives money*  
Your craven carcasses, by means of bowls,  
Tankards, cups, or flagons, some counterfeit  
Instil of Roman valour. Then, ye tramps,  
Return. We'll teach you how to shoulder pikes !  
Begone, ye hares, and drink yourselves a heart !—

[*Exeunt BEPPO and Peasants.*

*Enter RIENZI in full armour ; TRISTAN, CORNETO, MALATESTA, CONTI, MARCO, VILLANI, SOLDI, and others, all armed ; Soldiers, Archers, etc.*

*Rien.* Tristan, speedily take two hundred men  
To the Maggiore Gate. 'Tis, as we  
Learn from Palestrina, threaten'd. Pepin  
Himself advances thence in force. Meantime  
Cerroni waits his coming.

*Tris.* I shall be  
There, Sir, ere you have noted that we went.  
Fall in, my men ! 'Tis good ! Advance !

*[Exeunt TRISTAN and Soldiers.]*

*Cor.* Tribune,  
Thou dost not hold in doubt the road whereon  
Colonna doth advance ?

*Rien.* No doubt, good friend ;  
Our spies are trusty. From Tivoli ! None  
Than the Colonna better know the spot  
Where we are vulnerable.

*Cor.* And thou dost  
Elect to fix thy banner here ?

*Rien.* Ay, Count !  
Here 'twill be hottest ; no better place for  
Me and thee and our best friends to do our  
Rome best service. Giulio !—ye all  
Do see him on the Rampart there, wooing  
Th' horizon with eager eyes, that pray for

Th' appearance of an enemy as tho'  
Invoking angels !—Giulio Lulli !—

*Giu.* Ay, Sir ! What orders, Tribune ?

*Rien.*

Here to take

Root, Giulio ! Here, 'tis assured, the foe  
From Tivoli will chiefly spend himself.  
Soldi ! to the Porta Pia hasten ;  
Give orders there to Rosa to withdraw  
His garrison, and, leaving but a guard  
To watch the Gate, forthwith to reinforce  
Us here. [*Exit SOLDI and three or four Soldiers.*]

*Giu.* Rosa would have it thus, I know.

*Rien.* Much show of men upon the battlements  
Make not, until the foe shall seek to scale  
The walls. Thinking resistance to be weak,  
They'll bring their Rams to beat upon the Gate,  
Which labour will suffice to weary them,  
Till Rosa from the Porta Pia join  
His strength to ours. Then let go the Gate. The  
Leaders being trapp'd, we'll close the Gate. Hot  
Welcome we will give them all !—

*Giu.* Look, Tribune ! (*On the rampart.*)

Look where they come. They are upon us ! Quick !

[*RIENZI and others hurry upon the walls.*]

Stand to your arms ! Make fast the Gate. Keep close  
This way, Matteo—so. Lower thy bow,  
Filippo ! Lie all conceal'd. Some jars of  
Boiling oil and burning lime prepare. As

Thou dost say, Tribune, we will give them hot Reception.

*Mar.* 'Tis a brave show—both horse  
And foot.—Now one rides forth, another now ;—  
Now they would seem to halt—no, they show a  
Larger front.

*Giu.* Anselmo ! thy Company  
Keep in hand. Loose not an arrow !—

*Rien.* Canst thou  
Distinguish who may be the foremost ? They  
Wear their visors up.—By Scævola's burnt  
Hand ! 'tis Gianni Colonna leads ! O, if  
The Lord deliver thee and thy serpent  
Brood into my hand this day ! Now draw your  
Bows. Let loose, but at the rank and file. If  
It be possible, the leaders spare. I  
Would the leaders tempt at closer quarters  
To engage. [*The Archers discharge.*]

*Giu.* Well aim'd—and now another  
Better still.—Four horsemen bite the dust.—

*Cor.* See !  
They bring up their Rams.

*Rien.* The Gate will bear them.

*Enter a Messenger.*

What news, Sir ?

*Mes.* Cerroni bids me say that  
The Count Palatine storms even now the

Maggiore Gate, but that he himself  
Doth hold his own and more.

[*A noise of battering-rams.*

*Rienzi (descends).* Why, that is good.

Ply them with arrows ! Overwhelm their Rams !—

(*To Messenger*) And Tristan, know'st thou of him ?

*Mes.* Ay, Tribune.

By Cerroni's orders that Captain doth  
His force reserve to take the foe in flank.

*Enter ROSA and Soldiers.*

*Rien.* Thou art seasonably come, good Rosa !  
Quickly dispose thy men.—The Ramparts man.

[*Rosa and his Soldiers go on to the Ramparts.*

Good, trusty messenger ! But now for blows.  
Seize the first weapon that thou se'st, and smite.  
Romans ! Be firm to meet the foremost rush.

[*To the Archers on the stage.*

Ye archers, flinch not ; bide your time.—Let loose  
Together on the foe your wingèd shafts ;  
Then open out ! Whose onset ye arrest  
Not, shall find upon our lances and our swords  
The death they dare too long. Now suddenly  
Throw back the Gate !

[*The gate is thrown open, and some of the enemy  
enter, headed by STEFANELLO, PIETRO, and  
GIANNI COLONNA, SAVELLI, and others.  
A flight of arrows is discharged by the*



*defenders, who then open out, and each of the leaders upon either side engage. The gate is suddenly closed.*

*Gian.* Usurper! yield thyself  
And Rome. Thou art outnumber'd.

*Pie.* Victory!

*Rien.* Ye do delude yourselves. Ye all are trapp'd.  
Despair and death await ye all!

*Gian.* Boast not,  
Tyrant!

[RIENZI and GIANNI engage; also STEFANELLO  
and ROSA; VILLANI and PIETRO; MARCO  
and SAVELLI. All the hostile leaders are  
struck down.]

*Rien.* (to GIANNI). No day for mercy this, Gianni!  
Thee I did once forgive, but thou couldst not  
Forgive.—The earth is weary of thy name.  
Die, malefactor! 'tis all that is left  
For thee to do. (GIANNI dies. RIENZI looks round  
where all the Colonna are stretched. The  
fight ceases.) At last, at last! No more  
Shall Rome sicken of ye and consume. This  
Is deliverance indeed! Welcome, friends!—

*Enter* CORNETO, CERRONI, Soldiers, and people.

*Cor.* Pepin hath fled, pursued by Tristan.

*Rien.* Then  
Rome is as heav'n when rid of Lucifer.

Behold the fangless serpents ! Colonna's  
House troubles the world no more.

*Mal.* Stephen lives,  
Likewise at Avignon the Cardinal  
And Bishop.

*Rien.* Well ! their day is yet to come.—  
Wilt undertake the mission ? Thou shalt  
Be amply furnish'd. Well, sleep upon it,  
I would not rob thee of thy answer.

*Cer.* Sir,  
Thou hast brought it to a glorious end.

*Rien.* Not I, Cerroni, but even thou, and  
Ye, Rosa and Giulio, likewise. With  
Men such as these, what other issue ? Ye  
May sleep sound to-night, yea, all nights henceforth.  
Spent is the cloud that so long and darkly  
Lower'd about our City.

*Vil.* Wilt thou, Sir,  
Give orders ? Whither should we transport these  
Corpses ?

*Rien.* Fling them without the walls of Rome !  
The City they so long dishonour'd shall  
Hold no remnant of them. Let their bones be  
Scatter'd. Perjured and shameful were their lives.  
No Christian rites for them. Bear them forth !

[*The bodies of the Colonna are borne out of  
the gate. Citizens advance with wreaths  
and offer them to* RIENZI.]

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*1st Cit.* Deliverer of Rome ! all hail !

*Citizens repeat—*

“ All hail ! ”

*Rien.* Tush ! this is nought, my fellow-country-men ;—

We shall yet do far greater things than this !

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Capitol. The Council in session. CER-  
RONI, LULLI, CORNETO, GIOVANNI, MALATESTA,  
CONTI, MARCO GADDI, VILLANI, BERNARDO, and  
others.*

*Gio.* The Tribune's needs! Whate'er the business,  
Fellow-Councillors, we be met upon,  
Howe'er ye veil it, still through all disguise  
Do peer the features of a mendicant.

*Lul.* Thou speak'st as though the Tribune did  
demand

This money for his private ends. Methinks  
The needs of Rome and of Rienzi clash  
Not. What is this tax whereto the Tribune  
Urgeth your sanction? A speck, a drop,  
A gossamer-thread! Were it twice the size  
It still were nothing. Whom doth it press?  
I pray ye tell me that.

*Cer.* Whom irks it not—  
This speck, this thread of gossamer, whereof

Thou speak'st so lightly? A tax on salt! Dost  
Thou not know that to the Romans there is  
No impost half as hateful? Moreover,  
This new and odious tribute adds to  
The heap that weighs upon the people.  
Tax their salt to-day—what's left? To-morrow  
Tax th' air they breathe, the wells whereof they drink.  
I tell thee, Lulli, that by bare rumour  
Of this tax the populace thoroughly is  
Stirr'd. They have met together, and have sworn  
Another stiver they'll not yield.

*Ber.*

Justly,

Cerroni, seeing the revenues on  
Sights and shows and banquets all flung away.  
Is this our new Fabricius, with his  
Plough whereof we heard so much? Rienzi,  
With his splendours and his Court, out-dazzles  
Heliogabalus! No! Councillors,—  
If ye think it wise to goad the Romans  
Into flat mutine, vote for this impost.  
I'll not be one; and I do counsel ye,  
Look to your roofs and see your doors be barr'd  
[*Cries of the mob without*—"No tax!" "Down  
with all taxes!"

Ye do hear!

*Lul.*

Our chief advisers! E'en let  
Them bawl! 'Tis their vocation. 'Twere well  
To disregard their street-cries.

*Mar.* Heed them not!—

No more than other men am I in love  
With taxes, and, as the neediest, grudge,  
Albeit to the Good Estate, increase  
Of impost—salt, land, or house, its name be  
What it may. Yet if this tax the Tribune  
Doth demand, and doth declare the matter  
Urgent, rather than place upon his path  
Another trouble, I do give my vote  
To levy it forthwith.

*Cer.* Dost thou not see  
Thou hast no means thereof the payment to  
Enforce? 'Twill stir the people into  
Madness.

*Mar.* Not so, Cerroni. Lend but thine  
Aid and lead the way, and when they do see  
The Good Estate to hinge upon it—

*Cer.* Though  
Rome's salvation were the stake, I tell  
Thee, Marco, that they would fling it down!

*Gio.* So  
Runs my mind, Cerroni, also.

*Cer.* My soul  
I do pledge herein that if this matter  
Further be driven, for one calm hour  
In the city I will not answer.

[*Cries without*—"Down with the tax!" "Death  
to traitors!"

*Vil.* Have we not  
Heard enough? I think, Fellow-Councillors,  
That 'twere wise that we did test this matter  
By our votes.

*Ber.* Good! Let us be seated then.

*[They all take their places, and having inscribed  
their votes, the papers are placed in an urn.]*

*Cor.* (*having opened the votes*). Eight are against  
this tax. But four say "Ay."

*Cer.* The Council, therefore, doth reject this bill.  
'Twere not for a moment to be wish'd that  
Ye had acted otherwise. Sirs, we had  
Been torn in pieces else.

*Gio.* Who will convey  
The issue to the Tribune?

*Lul.* By your leave  
I charge myself with this poor office. Ye  
Have done for evil all that lies in ye,  
False to your trust!—Yet Rome shall weather it.—

*[Exit LULLI.]*

*Mar.* (*to CERRONI*). I am most deeply grieved,  
Cerroni, that  
In the hour of extremest need thou fail'st  
Rienzi. Yet to the people thou  
Shalt make thine answer.

*Cer.* To the people.  
Then, do I appeal.

*Ber.* And let Rienzi

Them forthwith convoke. None here do hold the  
Verdict doubtful. Our hands at least be clean.

*[The Council breaks up. Exeunt in different  
directions, all save MARCO and CERRONI.]*

*Mar.* What hast thou done, Cerroni! By thy voice  
Thou couldst have turn'd the scale, yet wantonly  
Thou dost now range thyself with these upon  
The rabble side, with mutinous faces  
Adversely set against the Tribune.

*Cer.* Be  
Sure, Marco, no other course is open.—  
The Captains of the Regions and the  
Trainbands likewise have declared themselves  
'Gainst further money-shedding.

*Mar.* 'Tis beside  
The issue! Rome strong and free, or bare and  
Helpless, once more the prey of those wild boars  
The Barons, and by thy vote to save a  
Paltry farthing thou fling'st her, weak, bleeding,  
Into their jaws again. For *one* piece of  
Silver?—not thirty pieces even! More  
Treacherous thou than Judas!

*Cer.* Marco! thou  
Seek'st to rouse me by thy words. Thou dost know  
Me well, and know'st that all my life hath been  
'Gainst tyranny unceasing war. Whether  
The tyrant's name were Senator or Pope  
Importing nothing. A Tribune now,—ay.



Rienzi hath play'd false to liberty !

*Mar.* And thou dost say so—thou that wert but  
now

Rienzi's friend, his counsellor, almost  
His guide ! Enough ! and with his enemies  
Go league thyself. Yet do not think to stand  
Where he hath stood ; nay, where he yet doth stand.  
Friendless thy defection leaves him not ;—  
Not were there ten Cerronis to fall off !

*Cer.* I do not seek to draw thee from his side,  
If thou hast still a mind to serve a tyrant,  
I blame thee not. But go thy way in peace ;  
Leave mine to me. Thine eyes will shortly see.

*Mar.* Pray Heaven they may soon behold what they  
Would see—justice to a traitor meted !

*Cer.* Therein at least we be in unity.

*[Exeunt in opposite directions.]*

SCENE II.—RIENZI'S *Palace.*

*Enter* MARCO, VILLANI, CORNETO, *and* LULLI.

*Rien.* What ! now to fall off, and in the very  
Hour that to my fortunes put the touchstone !  
I cannot think the Council thus insane.  
Are their eyes darken'd ? Cerroni ! what,  
Of all men, he ? I would have given him my  
Last crust, and he knows I would have giv'n it.

*Mar.* Thou know'st, Tribune, that of late Cerroni  
Seemed as 'twere to loiter ; withholding, too,  
His counsel when thereof thou hadst need.

*Rien.* True,  
I did perceive his eyes of late seem'd cross'd  
With changing lights of double purposes.  
Yet I thought,—well, we make too much of him.—  
There be others, I thank Heaven, Marco,  
There be many strong as Cerroni ; ay,  
That they are truer, stronger—much stronger !—  
—Yet for a miserable dole—a grain  
Or two of silver, whereof the loss were  
Scarcely to be felt—without one qualm to  
Watch an Empire crumble. 'Tis past belief !  
Lulli, Corneto, Marco, what think ye ?  
The people may be trusted ? What ?

*Mar.* Ay !  
I think, Tribune, they be steadfast. I think—

*Rien.* Think, Marco, think ! Thou dost not doubt  
thereof ?

*Mar.* The adverse voters in the Council did  
Allege the people hostile—

*Rien.* Marco !  
Mere subterfuge. The disloyal shelter  
Themselves 'neath frail defences such as these.

*Enter a Messenger.*

What is thy business, Sir? Deliver.

*Mes.* Tribune, the Cardinal-Legate, Bertrand  
Of Eux, with much retinue hath enter'd  
Rome.

*Mar.* The Cardinal in the city!

*Rien.* Strange,  
And his approach unheralded! Whom seeks  
This stealthy Cardinal?—

*Mes.* 'Tis thyself, great  
Tribune. Thus am I bid to say.

*Rien.* Well, Sir,  
I am easily found. The Cardinal's  
Search shall be rewarded. Here or elsewhere  
I will attend his Eminence. Thus, Sir,  
Reporting, commend me to the Legate.

*[A flourish of trumpets.]*

*Mes.* His Eminence is here.

*Rien.* By Cæsar! this  
Nimble Cardinal needs no harbinger.

*Enter the Cardinal-Legate, BERTRAND D'EUX,  
preceded by his Secretary, and followed by a  
numerous train of Ecclesiastics and others, bearing  
the insignia of his rank. As he enters RIENZI  
advances to meet him, and kneels to kiss his hand.*

*Car.* Thy knee is bent, Rienzi, but I fear  
Less supple is thine heart. That kneeling not

Makes counterfeit of homage !

*Rien.* Were it to  
Seem good to Him, who doth discern afar  
The thoughts of all His creatures, and in whose  
High court each human sigh is register'd,  
Here to lay bare this soul of mine, thou wouldst  
Recall thy words !

*Car.* My words ! 'Tis of thy deeds,  
Rienzi, that there is question now.—  
Most sinful man ! spotted with arrogance,  
The Pope himself (of all popes meek and most  
Long-suffering) beyond all possible  
Endurance thou hast provok'd. By acts and  
Words thou hast defied, him th' Anointed one,  
The Elect of Heaven !

*Rien.* To the Elect  
Of Heaven I have in all things yielded.—  
Defiance ! None have I defied, nor do  
Defy, saving the enemies of Rome.—  
Defiance, Holy Cardinal ! Then is  
Mercy but revenge, and peace but as war !

*Car.* Peace, dost thou say, Rienzi ? By God's truth !  
For all your artless notes, ye birds of peace  
Do build your nests as high as may be in  
The coign of arsenals. But by no means  
A man of peace—verily, far other  
His Holiness esteems thee ; yea, but a  
Stirrer of sedition ; a troubler

Of smooth waters ; a pitfall and a snare.—  
Nay, sir, it is the Pope that speaks ! Say then,  
What gift or attribute of Sainthood or  
Of regal state, forgetting whence thou art,  
Or whose the hand that rais'd thee from the dust,  
Hast thou not claim'd, what title not usurp'd ?

*Rien.* Usurper am I none, most Reverend  
Legate. Nought have I claim'd, nor now do claim,  
Saving th' imperishable rights—our own—  
Of Roman Citizens.

*Car.* As big with pride  
As ever are thy words, Rienzi ! Still  
Swells thy uncurb'd heart, impenitent, and  
Still immoderate as the untam'd sea.  
In evil-doing dost thou yet rejoice—  
Thou wilt not bend, then broken shalt thou be !

*Rien.* Though thou should'st launch upon me  
thunderbolts,  
Go back I cannot, Cardinal.

*Car.* Go back  
Thou canst not, and advance thou shalt not. Then  
Even where thou stand'st, stricken shalt thou be !  
Thy night hath come !—Even the exhaustless  
Beam of Clement's infinite pity hath  
For thee burnt out, in most thick and doubly  
Folded darkness leaving thee plung'd. Therefore  
Thus saith the Holy Father ! “ Because thy  
Heart is stiff with fraud and bare of meekness

As granite rock of blossom ; because thine  
Eyes with fatness swell, and thy sight is clogg'd ;  
Because that thine ears be void of hearing,  
And thou art become of understanding  
Duller than the wild ass ; because that thou  
Dost vaunt thyself, and with thy touch profane  
Hast pure things infected ; because falsely  
Thou hast prophesied ; because, Son of  
Perdition ! in the balance thou art  
Weigh'd, and in all things save fraud and falsehood  
Art found wanting ; because upon thy brow  
Is written ' blasphemy,' Forerunner of  
Antichrist !—therefore art thou cut off from  
Church and from thy offices depos'd. Lo !  
Thou art accursed and excommunicate."—  
Go ! fix the ban on ev'ry church in Rome (*to his*  
*Servants*).

[*Exeunt the Cardinal and his train. A pause.*]

*Rien.* The bolt hath fallen, still we be riven  
Not. How goes it with ye ? Are ye not daz'd ?—

*Cor.* Not much mov'd, so thou stand'st firm,  
*Rienzi.*

*Rien.* Accurs'd and excommunicate ! These be  
Ominous words, and big with portent. The  
Cardinal did speak them, or I dream. Ye  
All did hear him !—Methinks I should be chang'd ;  
My hair should blanch with terror and my limbs,  
By this so sudden lightning, should be to

Powder shrivell'd. Yet they be whole, my friends,—  
Friends! I am right bold to call ye so. I  
Do absolve ye all of further friendship.

*Lul.* Thou speak'st not as thou think'st, Rienzi.  
Thou

Dost not in thine heart esteem us craven.  
What, for that a priest hath curs'd, to fly thee !

*Mar.* 'Tis of a Cardinal to curse,—pertains  
To his high office as his mitre doth,  
Or alb, or chasuble ; all these disus'd  
Or laid aside, like to ourselves he were,  
An ordinary mortal.

*Cor.* Do not think,  
Rienzi, that by glib anathema  
We can be snared. This wordy Cardinal  
From the abundant quivers of the Church  
Must other shafts produce.

*Rien.* My Corneto !  
I think that we shall weather it. Yet by  
These ghostly threats the people may be  
Scared from their allegiance.

*Mar.* Nay, seeing  
Us unmoved, they will hold these curses e'en  
As a beldame's shrieks.

*Rien.* So be it, Marco.—  
Good friends, in the matter of this tax the  
People must be straightway summon'd. Give  
Orders for th' alarum-bell.— [*Exit an Attendant.*]

*Enter* TRISTAN and ROSA.

Behold where

Others also come to whose color I

Would swear ! Well, Sirs, what news ?

*Tris.*

Alas ! ill-starr'd

And most malevolent fortune, Tribune.

*Rien.* Having in these late moments drunken of  
Much bitterness, more we are loth to quaff.

Yet speak !

*Tris.*

Pepin, Count of Minorbino,

Hath enter'd Rome !

*All.*

How ?

*Rien.*

Pepin, the Count of

Minorbino, and in Rome ! The madman !

Alone and unattended ?

*Tris.*

Not so, Sir ;

Two hundred men are with him.

*Rien.*

Why, this is

Worse than all the curses of the Church. Who

Gave him entrance ? The traitor's name, Tristan !

*Tris.* As I have learn'd, there was no treachery.

At the Pincian Gate the guard, knowing

That the Cardinal-Legate with much state

Bore down on Rome, believ'd this Pepin's force

To be the Legate's escort, and without

Parley free entry did accord him.

*Rien.*

Saints !



Hath he still breath to say he is in Rome?—  
What, are our Romans stones ! But we lose time.  
Where makes he halt ?—In Borgo?—

*Tris.* Nay, Sir. He

Hath encamp'd within Colonna's Gardens.

*Rien.* Encamp'd ! Camps ! Give me patience !

Camps ! What,

A hostile camp within our very walls !

Good, trusty Rosa, back to thy Quarter

For dear life.—Thou, Tristan, too.—We must scourge

The fellow forth ere he hath time to root.

[*Exeunt* TRISTAN and ROSA.]

Two hundred men ! Two hundred lunatics !—

Why, they'll be but a mere mouthful for our

Romans. Convoke the Citizens forthwith,—

Cerroni !—Bah ! I had forgotten. How

Sometimes custom outruns memory !—No

Cerroni now !—We can do without him

Well, and he shall be the first to know it.

And now for the Capitol. Come, my friends !

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE III.—*The Castle of St. Angelo.*

*Enter* ROSSI, *conducting* FRANCESCA and VIOLANTE  
and Attendants.

*Fran.* The Castle of St. Angelo ! 'Tis grim  
And cheerless, Rossi.

*Ros.* Gracious Madam,  
'Tis a stout fortress, as sanctuary  
Secure, and unassailable as a  
Glacier.

*Vio.* In truth, 'tis well-nigh cold as  
Any Alpine summit !

*Fran. (looking round).* Sad memories  
Seem, like mosses, to encrust these walls. How  
Like a knell the echoes of the portal,  
Closing behind us as we enter'd, spake  
To my heart ! What dost thou say, Violante ?

*Vio.* Had we the mind to let our thoughts run  
loose  
In melancholy imaginings, the  
Spirit of the place were little adverse.—  
Yet are we here, sister, but for a space.—

*Fran.* Rossi, what said the Tribune ?

*Ros.* Great Madam,  
The Tribune's speech was brief and hurried. "Make  
All things ready for departure to St.  
Angelo. I follow shortly."—Meantime  
Ye are housed safely, Madam.

*Fran.* Ay, if of  
Silence and of gloom security be  
Born ! Yet to be here is price enough of  
Safety. Good Rossi, thou hast done well, and  
Now charge thyself yet further with the safe  
Bestowing of these our kind attendants.

*Ros.* Trust me, Madam. They shall be so housed  
and

Tended that they shall mark no change.

[*Rossi and Attendants exeunt.*]

*Vio.*

'Tis as

Thick night ; yet do I think, Francesca, 'twill  
Soon pass.

*Fran.* O ! methinks, Violante, I could  
Have much endur'd of open foes, or of  
Friends timid, or of traitors, even. But  
The Church's curse, the malediction  
That makes an outcast of Rienzi !

*Vio.*

Think

Not so deeply on't ; trust me, it weighs not.  
E'en in the general mind 'tis not so  
Esteem'd.—Thus Giulio saith, Francesca.

*Fran.* Yet were thy fears as mine, hadst thou  
beheld

The Cardinal as I did see him. Him  
In the corridor I met ; ominous  
His very step, and he moved as though he  
Shook from his feet contamination.  
As stones his eyes were fix'd, and when I knelt  
And bow'd my head (the which his cold fingers  
Scantly touch'd), his "Pax vobiscum, Daughter,"  
Thickly syllabled, in mine ears did sound  
More like to ban than benison !

*Vio.*

We shall

See this cloud, Francesca, trust me we shall,  
Pass sudden as it came, and leave no trace.

*Fran.* Yet are there clouds in every quarter.  
E'en were the thunders of the Church at rest,  
The Tribune's enemies thicken around.  
The very Council doth declare against  
Him. The people clamour. Beneath our  
Casements ourselves have heard their furious  
Cries of mutine. So weak they think us that  
A hostile band within our midst encamps.  
Nay, 'tis such odds 'twould need a giant's strength  
To cope withal !

*Vio.* And hath Rienzi not  
A giant's strength ? And doth he not o'erstop  
This puny race, as yon hill o'erlooks the  
Valley ?

*Fran.* These men cannot breathe the vig'rous  
Air of freedom. They forsake Rienzi  
E'en upon the mountain-tops of Liberty !  
Why seek we refuge in these ominous  
Walls ? Prisoners we are, my Violante,  
And presently shall Cola come to tell  
Us so.—

*Vio.* Good sister, if truly we be  
Prisoners, Cola and my Giulio  
Will aid to make our fetters bearable.  
A prison-house, when shared with those we love,  
Becomes, indeed, a bower !

*Enter Rossi.*

*Fran.* The day wears  
Onward ! A day, methinks, full-laden to  
Its latest hour with all the spites of Fate.  
(*To Rossi*) Hast thou heard ought, good Rossi ?

*Ros.* The Tribune bids thee, Madam, be of good  
Cheer. He doubts not ere the set of sun that  
All will smile again, and Rome more stoutly  
Than before will follow as he bids.

*Fran.* He  
Bears a stout heart as ever. Well, I'll think  
As he doth think, though my heart as fearful  
Is as his is fearless. Come, Violante,  
Shall we go ? [*Excunt omnes.*]

*Vio.* Ay ! together, Sister.

*Fran.* Come !

SCENE IV.—*The Capitol. The bell of the Capitol tolling.*

*Enter Citizens and many people.*

*1st Cit.* Here's a coil indeed. A crop of troubles  
Sprung up and ripen'd in a single night.

*2nd Cit.* Didst thou e'er know, Fillipo, Dame  
Fortune  
Otherwise ? *One* single frown, *one* passing  
Gift ! Nay ! for good or ill, the jade empties

With both hands her bag upon you !

*1st Cit.*

'Tis so,

Guiseppe. Our Tribune's shoulders should be  
Broad !

*2nd Cit.* Ay ! but he's a man cunning in fence.

You think him to be breathless, nigh driv'n to  
A corner ; yet by some quick artifice,  
Some sleight of hand, yours is the foil flies up,  
And at your breast you find his point drive home !

*1st Cit.* By the Virgin ! he needs his cunning  
now—

Driven to bay by Pepin, accursed and  
Excommunicate !—

*Enter more people.*

See how thick they come !

*2nd Cit.* Ay ! they come ; but I like their temper  
not.

These Romans suffer ill fortunes poorly.

*[Others come forward.]*

*3rd Cit.* I'll not fight, I tell thee, for any man  
That's bann'd by Holy Church.

*4th Cit.*

Fight for thyself,

Man. Dost want Pepin to rule over thee ?

*3rd Cit.* He that taxes least, be he my ruler.

*Others (advancing).* Well said, old Ferdinand ! No  
more taxes !

*Enter VILLANI and BERNARDO.*

*Vil.* (to Citizens). Well, fellow-citizens, are ye prepared

To drive this Count of Minorbino hence ?

*3rd Cit.* These Germans be, so am I told, rough folk

To tackle.

*4th Cit.* Dost think, Messer Villani,

The Tribune will attack them ?

*Vil.* So thou and

These do lend him aid. Thou surely for the

Good Estate a pike wilt shoulder ?

*4th Cit.* Humph ! Sir,

Adversity hath made of me a man

Much chang'd. I am become a man of peace !

*Vil.* I tell thee for that peace thou'lt have to pay

A fair round sum.

*3rd Cit.* I'll not fight more for this

Same Tribune. I did believe, and others

Likewise, that his Good Estate meant "peace"—no

Taxes neither ; and we are tax'd and ground.—

*4th Cit.* Thou dost convince me, Ferdinand. Thou art

In the right exceedingly. No taxes !

*Many voices.* Down with all taxes !

*3rd Cit.* Ay, brothers, ay, but

I go further on this line. I do say—

Down with the taxer !

*4th Cit.*

Why that is logic.

“Down with the taxer!”—“Down with the Tribune!”

*The cry is taken up by the crowd*—“Down with the Tribune!”

*Enter hurriedly RIENZI, CORNETO, MARCO, LULLI, and others.*

*Mar. (seizing the 4th Citizen).* Traitor ! what say'st thou,

Thou stirrer of sedition ?

*Lul. (seizing one of the disaffected).* Sirrah !

Dost thou cry out against the Tribune ? How ?

*[The crowd falls back and shows signs of fear.]*

*4th Cit.* Your pardon, Sir—we did but jest.—

*Rien.*

'Tis but

Sorry time for jesting, Rome being in

Sore peril. Nay, let them go, my Marco,—

Giulio too. Their hearts went not with their

Tongues. Yet idle words that in smooth seasons

Ruffle no ear, in perilous times be

Treasonable. Tush ! ye are forgiven.

*[Cries of—“Long live Rienzi!” A pause, during which RIENZI ascends the steps, and, standing by the marble lion, addresses the multitude.]*

Friends ! *(Looking round.)* Ay, Romans, I think ye all be friends



(I do not see Cerroni here). I think  
I have your hearts ; I know that yesterday,  
At least, I had them. To give them in good  
Fortune when the sky is blue, but when a  
Passing cloud its brightness doth obscure, to  
Pluck them back again, that is not your wont,  
My friends. 'Tis not the Roman way !

*Ber. (aside).* I am as wax ! If he speak on, I melt.

*1st Cit. (to BERNARDO).* O ! even now but for that  
salt tax !

Bernardo, didst vote against it ?

*Ber.*

Ay, but

I do repent me.—

*Voices.* —Hush ! the Tribune speaks.—

*Rien.* Countrymen ! brothers, my fellow-workers !  
Ye have learn'd to-day (for each church door in  
Our City doth flaunt it to your sense) that  
Nicola Rienzi, Tribune of Rome,  
Is excommunicate ! (*Murmurs.*) Ay, e'en upon  
Those very doors (do ye not mind ye ?) how  
Oft in other days were ye not wont to  
Read—and, reading, how your souls did kindle !—  
My Oath that ye should have again your old,  
Your "Good Estate" ! That oath is not forsworn.  
Freedom is ours ! The "Good Estate" is ours !  
Shall we preserve them, Romans, or do we  
Lose them, I being excommunicate ?—

[*Some cry "No !" (Murmurs)*

So think I also, Romans. Yet to hold  
Fast those liberties, for the which ye have  
So greatly striv'n, even now your fingers  
Must be fighting.— [Murmurs.

*Mar. (aside.)* I do fear these Romans,  
They will forsake the stricken stag!

*Rien.* Yet, friends,  
Rienzi, bound or loos'd, doth little touch  
Your destinies. Yours is the eagle's flight,  
Uncurb'd by man, nor measur'd by his will!

*Ber.* 'Tis well said.

*Rien.* There within a mile of ye,  
Your enemies lie camp'd. O gods! within  
Our walls, the sacred walls of Rome! Pepin  
And his myrmidons (tush! a mere boat's crew)  
Have found themselves a lair. Sucking from  
Out these curses of the Church, whereof we  
Spake, a kind of strength, they raise their voices  
And do roar against us. What say ye, then?—  
Will ye not scourge them forth ere they have time  
To root? (*Murmurs.*) Nay, they be but two  
hundred!

*Vil.* Why,  
They mock at us Romans, these two hundred!  
Forward, Romans! Do ye not "Forward!" cry?

[A few cry "Forward!"

*Rien.* Romans! do ye not heed nor hear?  
There was a time (nor distant neither) when

Words like these would from heart to heart have  
leap'd

As fire in dry grass. How cold ye are,  
My countrymen ! Your liberty, your lives,  
All are at stake, and ye are as ice. 'Tis  
No question for the morrow ; 'tis for  
Action, headlong, now—immediate !  
Rome's existence lieth in your hands. Speak !—  
Have ye no answer ? But the fault is mine.  
I lack, methinks, or I have lost the pow'r  
To plead. (*A pause. The people seem to sway hither  
and thither in argument ; then there is a silence.*)

Oh, mighty Shades of Marius  
And of Scipio ! If your immortal  
Essence yet be stirr'd by earthly throe and  
Shock, that seem to change the colour of the  
Blood of this poor Race, into th' hearts of these ,  
Degenerate sons, your pale and puny  
Progeny, will ye not breathe one spark of  
Your celestial fire !—

*Giu.* Be patient

With them, Tribune, yet. Have ye no answer ?—  
Shame, fellow-citizens ! 'tis your own cause  
The Tribune pleads. What soulless things ye are  
Become ! Do ye await a sign from heav'n  
Ere that ye stir ? What, the Ship may split and  
Ye'll not reef a sail nor seize a rope ! Gods !  
How can I win you seeing Rienzi's

Tongue thunders unheeded? Yet there be some—

Matteo, Sacchi, Soldi, Giovanni,

Bernardo! Some of ye, at least, *had* souls!—

[MATTEO, SACCHI, SOLDI, BERNARDO *come forward.*

*Ber.* Not only so, but still possess them. Let  
The Tribune lead, we follow!

*Giu.* Behold, my  
Tribune! “Peradventure there be ten!”

*Rien.* O!  
True and Faithful! ye that stand up among  
The ruins’ unshaken towers! Ye shall  
Have statues on the Capitol, and on  
The Forum’s walls, on brazen tablets, shall  
Your names be writ! Good Bernardo!  
Thou mak’st atonement for thy adverse vote.—

[*He takes BERNARDO’S hand.*

*Ber.* Still my good Tribune——

*Rien. (to the people).* I yet await your  
Voices, Romans!

*Cec. (in the crowd).* Tribune! there be many  
Of us ready to follow. Speak only,  
And swear before us here to drop this tax.

*Rien.* What, Romans! must ye have bribes to face  
your  
Foes? Is it not your cause? Good sooth! Cravens!  
That do love your miserable hoardings  
Better than Rome or liberty! What, ye’ll

Pay no taxes? Then to your slave-bosoms  
Take back your Tyrants! Go, trumpet it forth,  
Let it be known to all the Universe,  
That for a copper coin the Men of Rome  
Have sold their Mother! Ye abandon me!  
Tribune Rienzi leaves ye to your styes!  
Abase yourselves; lick Pepin's feet; go, wear  
His yoke.—O! ye are past all praying for,  
And may your Wives protect ye! (*To his supporters*)  
Friends, away!

[*Exeunt RIENZI and his friends, and the assemblage breaks up in confusion.*]

*Scene closes.*

SCENE V.—*The COUNT OF MINORBINO's Camp  
in Rome in the Colonna Quarter.*

*Enter COUNT PEPIN of Minorbino, WERNER, FORTIFI-  
CIOCCA, Guards and Attendants on PEPIN.*

*Pep.* This Castle of St. Angelo, doth it,  
Fortifiocca, defy assault?

*For.* My lord,  
'Tis to thy present force impregnable.

*Pep.* So strong! What following hath Rienzi  
Still?

*For.* His followers being greatly shrunk,  
His strength were little, save for the thickness  
Of his walls.



*Pep.* Would we could scale them ! Meantime  
These walls will grow none weaker by delay.  
Yet were we to issue forth and test the  
Strength of this so vaunted fortress, dost thou  
Not think that of Rienzi's faction  
We should draw hundreds to our flag ?

*For.* By no  
Means, Count. Though loving not Rienzi now,  
Such overt act of thine would turn against  
Thyself the people's hate. Thou dost not  
Know the Roman temper.

*Wer.* Pardon, my lord,  
My sentence is to move. Our soldiers  
Sicken in this atmosphere of sloth. They  
Chafe for action. Let them loose, my lord !

*Pep.* Thy bold advice I do like, brave Werner ;  
Yet too few we be to chance disaster.  
A few hours' patience. Rienzi must  
Withdraw himself. Then, without the loss of  
One of our small band, ours is the Castle !

*For.* There is a way, methinks, my lord, to speed  
Surrender.

*Pep.* Speak then, Fortifiocca—speak.

*For.* This Mole of Hadrian, though proof against  
Assault, is not impenetrable. Thou  
Hast in camp many an adventurous  
Spirit that, for mere frolic's sake or gold,  
Would back himself to find his way into

Rienzi's hiding-place. A footing gain'd,  
All guarded as it may be, Rienzi's  
Life lies at his mercy.

*Pep.* That were to cut  
The knot indeed ! On such an instrument  
Canst thou lay thy hand ?

*For.* A prisoner thou  
Hast in camp, my lord, lately made captive,  
Sword in hand and seeking to inflame, e'en  
Against thyself, certain of the Romans.

*Pep.* Being so much a Roman, as it seems,  
Wherefore should he against Rienzi turn  
The sword thou speak'st of ?

*For.* Rienzi's friend he  
Was. Being become his enemy, hates  
Him with bitterness of new enmity.

*Pep.* How call you him ?

*For.* Cerroni.

*Pep.* His name I  
Know. How should I tempt him to this course ?

*For.* Thou  
Hast to give two things men value more than  
Gold—liberty and vengeance.

*Pep.* I will  
See this prisoner. Let him be summon'd.

*Wer.* He waits without, my lord.

[*Exeunt WERNER and others. They re-enter  
with CERRONI, chained and guarded.*]

*Pep.* (to CERRONI). Approach, Sir. I  
Would have speech with thee.—Thy name, Cerroni?

*Cer.* The same, Count Palatine, and thy captive.

*Pep.* Thou, so am I told, wert of Rienzi  
Staunchest and foremost friend, art most brave, and  
Fearless to the verge of rashness (as thy  
Late act doth prove thee). Being so friendly  
Then to him whom they call Tribune, how  
Came about that when his star declined thou  
Didst fall off from him?

*Cer.* He had grown too great.

*Pep.* How say'st thou?

*Cer.* He had learn'd tyranny. Pow'r  
Had dazzled him.—There was not space in Rome  
For free men to breathe freely.—

*Pep.* Thou art to  
Tyrants then, an enemy?

*Cer.* I am of  
The people.

*Pep.* And ye do tyrants hate?

*Cer.* We are free men.

*Pep.* And yet these chains——

*Cer.* Count! thy  
Fetters do not bind my soul.

*Pep.* Well, Sir, I'll  
Not dispute with thee. Say now, "Thou art free.  
Return thee to thy friends, but keep the peace,"  
How wouldst thou answer?



*Cer.* My friends are Romans.  
How can we have peace with those that, breathing  
Fire and sword, be come up against us ?

*Pep.* No  
More than this ?

*Cer.* What further wouldst thou have ?

*Pep.* Thy  
Service.

*Cer.* How ? To fight against my country !

*Pep.* No war we wage on Romans, but on him  
Thyself call'st tyrant ; even Rienzi.

*Cer.* Herein, my lord, I do not see the path  
To freedom.

*Pep.* We did speak of tyrants, Sir. —  
Is it, in the people's faith, a good  
And lawful thing to slay a tyrant ?

*Cer.* Ay,  
Count, assuredly.

*Pep.* Then slay Rienzi !

*Cer.* I to kill Rienzi ! I to do this !

*Pep.* Heed me, Roman. Nor peace nor freedom  
will

There be in Rome the while Rienzi lives.  
We wish the Romans well. If by secret  
Means the tyrant can be taken off our  
Ends unite, nor need one hair of Roman  
Suffer. Thou hast been close to Rienzi's  
Closest self. Thou know'st well the Castle of

St. Angelo ?

*Cer.* 'Tis true. I know it well.

*Pep.* Lead then, at midnight, certain friends of mine

To that same fortress. Where at that hour  
Rienzi may be found, thou best dost know.  
With secrecy and skill thus introduc'd—  
These friends I spake of—fall upon him with  
Your swords, and forthwith make an end of him  
And tyranny !

*Cer.* And I to do this !

*Pep.* Ay,

Thou and these. The recompense, thy freedom,  
With what else, how great soe'er, may in thine  
Eyes seem precious.—Thou dost not answer !

*Cer.* What ! are my lineaments so wolfish, Count  
Of Minorbino, that to thy sense I  
Seem a man fashion'd by nature and cut  
Out for such a sorry piece of cut-throat  
Work? Are there not hireling assassins  
By the score in Rome, that, for mere stipend,  
Will to their elbows plunge their murderous  
Knives in any blood that irks you?—By your  
Leave, Count !—The impress of his hand—'tis true  
A tyrant's hand—is in mine own yet warm.  
His friend I was, 'tis past ; his enemy  
Am now ; but I do swear by Heaven that  
Neither now nor later his assassin

Will I be !

*For.* Had Brutus reason'd thus, the  
Progeny of Cæsar were to this hour  
Our rulers.

*Cer.* Thou hast play'd many a part,  
Fortifiocca. The last I saw thee act  
Was Sylla's ; was't not so ? The character  
Became thee poorly. The part of Brutus  
Better might fit thee. Try it, man—try it !

*Pep.* (*to CERRONI*). Thou hast made thy choice.

More words were bootless.

(*To the Guards*) Remove the prisoner ; have him in  
close

Keeping. Be vigilant, yet treat him well.

*Wer.* For his safe custody I do answer,

Count. [*Exeunt WERNER and Guards with CERRONI.*]

*Pep.* Hast thou a mind, Fortifiocca, this  
Enterprise thyself to undertake ?

*For.*

Thou

Know'st, Count of Minorbino, how great the  
Hatred I do bear Rienzi, sharpen'd,  
Moreover, by long months' captivity  
Within his dungeons : therefore were it  
Joy to me to feel my rapier at  
His throat. Yet the feud between us, being  
Beyond all other enmities, bars me  
In double measure from th' attempt. But if  
It so please you—pleasing myself too—by

Stragem of other colour (forthwith  
To be conn'd and meditated deeply),  
To trap this fellow, with all the skill and  
Cunning that I have, I pledge my service.

*Pep.* Thine answer pleases, Fortifiocca, and,  
To aid thee in the task, will place of men  
And money at thy call as thou may'st deem  
Sufficient. Moreover, if success—  
As I do doubt not—reward thy labours,  
Claim from myself what recompense thou wilt.

*For.* Vengeance will suffice, Count Palatine.  
Revenge, like virtue, is its own reward !     [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*A street in Rome. A mob, headed by  
CECCO ALESSO and other Citizens.*

*Cec.* He hath traduced and mock'd us, Citizens !

*1st Cit.* Likewise hath tax'd us to the uttermost.

*Cec.* "The Good Estate," forsooth ! He hath  
scuttled

The ship, and foundering left us.

*Cits.*

Revenge !

Let him die the death of traitors !

*Cec.*

He is

Condemn'd, and he shall suffer.

*Cits.*

Forward to

St. Angelo and drag the Traitor forth.

*Cec.* To arms, Romans, and to St. Angelo !

*1st Cil.* A moment, hold. Bethink thee, Alesso,  
'Tis well-arm'd. We have no Rams nor ladders.  
We cannot with our fingers scale the walls.

*Cec.* Nay, but our fingers, so ye are nimble,  
Shall make both Rams and ladders.

*Cits.* Forward to  
St. Angelo !

*As they are going off, enter FORTIFIocca, BALDI,  
and NERI.*

*For.* We come in time for some  
Hot enterprise. How, my friend, Alesso !

*Cec.* What, Fortifiocca, thou ? I deem'd thee dead  
And buried.

*For.* Though of burial I  
Somewhat have learn'd, thou seest no ghost ; 'tis  
warm. [*Gives his hand.*]  
Let that assure thee.

*Cec.* Thy coming bodes small  
Good to Nicola Rienzi.

*For.* No more  
Than ye yourselves be bent on, unless mine  
Ears be turn'd deceivers. Whither go ye ?

*Cec.* Whither ? To St. Angelo, where still the  
Traitor flouts us.

*Voices.* Away ! Away !

*For.* Tarry,

Friends—tarry ! Think ye to storm the fortress  
With your finger-nails ? Why, Pepin himself  
Holds back.

*Cec.* Speak not of Pepin's hateful name.  
We need no foreign aid. The work we have  
In hand is for Roman sinews. They'll  
Be tough enough, I swear. Lend, too, thine aid.

*For.* Ay, Cecco, gladly too for any work  
That's feasible. But this your purpose is  
Foredoom'd to failure. 'Tis work for thousands.

*Cec.* How ? We be a host.

*For.* Yet to dash yourselves  
Against this fortress as a mere wave that  
Impotently flings itself upon a  
Cliff, spending itself in spray. Moreover,  
No leader have ye.

*Ces.* Leaders ! We want no  
Leaders. Rome's ruin have they been.

*For.* Truly !  
Yet be advis'd. Be patient but for  
A few brief hours. Hark ye ! Rienzi flies !

*Voices.* Rienzi flies ?

*For.* Ay.

*Cec.* How know'st thou that ?

*For.* No  
Matter whence or how my knowledge comes. Yet  
'Tis certain. Wherefore, then, waste yourselves on  
Such vain work, when without one stroke the foe

And fortress shortly shall be yours? Let him  
Escape then !

*Cec.* What ! let him forth to plan more  
Treachery against us—unpunish'd, too ?  
Never !

*For.* Good. Then ye shall capture him.

*Cec.* How ?

*For.* Rienzi, 'neath the mantle of the night,  
Will seek to steal away, and in disguise ;  
Therefore disperse yourselves and guard each Gate.  
All that from the City seek egress be  
Vigilant to note, and question each  
That seems to ye to shroud himself.

*Cec.* And thou ?

*For.* Myself, with these two trusty friends that  
bear

Me company, will to the Gate Salara,  
That stands upon the northern roads whereby  
Th' Apennines best may be gain'd, and whereof  
My mind hath chiefly cause to doubt.

*Cec.* My friends,  
Ye hear ! Doth this design seem good to ye ?

*Cits.* Ay, Cecco Alesso.

*Cec.* Then be it so.  
We will adventure. Thus. To each Gate be  
There assign'd three parties of ten men, and  
Each to hold three hours' watch. Sandio, number  
Thy men ; Lorenzo, thou ; thou, Martin, too ;

Jacopo, Paolo, likewise. Let all  
With stealth and secrecy be done. Away !

[*Exeunt* Citizens.

And thou, Fortifiocca ?

*For.* I shall await

Thee, Cecco, near Sallust's house at seven ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—*The Castle of St. Angelo. An open window at the back looks out upon the City and the Tiber. A starlight night. RIENZI alone at the window.*

*Rien.* How fair the night is, and how bright your glow,  
Ye stars ! And can ye shine so steadfastly  
Upon this den of pilferers and thieves ?  
Yet ye do well, methinks, your wonted light  
To shed, for I have rais'd Rome some cubits  
Nigher to your brightness. O Infinite  
Nature ! harmonious and exhaustless  
Order of the Universe ! Thou gav'st not  
Birth to this most fickle and unstable  
Race. Immutable and Eternal, thou  
Canst not heed the pitiful disorder  
Of our marr'd lives. For one bright hour I seem'd  
Amongst the gods to sit, and in their ranks  
Serene to mould an empire. It seem'd 'twas  
I that did bid the stream of Fate flow here



Or there, apportioning Rome her course.  
To-day reveals my puny channels dry,  
And, far beyond the desolate ruins  
Of my vain handiwork, mine eyes behold,  
Lifting itself unmeasured, uncontroll'd,  
The cold and gleaming sea of Destiny !

*Enter Rossi.*

What of thy lady ? How fares she, Rossi ?

*Ros.* Though restless somewhat, her Excellency  
Hath taken rest.

*Rien.* That is well. Nor cast down  
In spirit, Rossi ? What of that ?

*Ros.* Sir, though  
Subdued, she is unconquer'd, and doth bear  
Herself as 'twere prepared for any fate  
That she may share with thee.

*Rien.* Thy mistress is  
Of rare nature, Rossi. Whatsoever  
Mysteries are yet to be resolv'd ere  
That we see daylight, let her be assur'd  
Together we will face them. Know'st thou of  
Giulio Lulli ? Is he now within ?

*Ros.* Upon the ramparts he doth make his rounds ;—  
The Captain Tristan likewise.

*Rien.* All know the  
Orders for the morrow ?

*Ros.* All, my Tribune.

*Enter a Messenger, who gives a message to ROSSA.*

The Bishop, my lord, craves audience.

*Rien.* Of

Whom dost thou speak? What Bishop, Rossi?—

*Ros.* Of

Orvieto, my lord.

*Rien.* I had forgot

Well-nigh the name of Orvieto. Yet

Admit him, Rossi. (*Exit ROSSI.*) How swiftly  
doth the

Memory let loose the names even of

Those ourselves have injur'd! In unity

Our hearts moved once together, and did grow

So nearly that there seem'd not space eno'

For any weed, yet sprung up a something

Big enough to part us!

*Enter the BISHOP OF ORVIETO.*

[*Rienzi advances and offers to kiss the Bishop's  
hand. The Bishop repels him.*

*Rien.* —I had forgot,

Most Reverend Father. I am unclean

And excommunicate!

*Bish.* Alas! Cola

Rienzi, my whilom son, that thou hast

Cause to say so!

*Rien.* What converse canst thou hold

With one judged of the Church to be the chief  
Of sinners ?

*Bish.* 'Tis my high privilege, e'en  
At the eleventh hour, to rescue all  
That do not spurn a Saviour.

*Rien.* Truly  
Th' eleventh hour hath struck ! And me thou dost  
Hold far sunk in guiltiness ?

*Bish.* He whom the  
Church casts out is by Heaven accurs'd.

*Rien.* I  
Do believe th' Almighty doth the heart of  
Man alone regard ; that undefil'd, the  
Pope himself doth idly thunder.

*Bish.* What heart  
On earth beats undefil'd, Rienzi ! Dost  
Know so well thine own, and canst thou say that  
It is humble, vaunts itself not, throbs not  
With arrogance, is unfleck'd with pride ?

*Rien.* Good  
Bishop, look around. These walls do not preach  
In vain. I should have learn'd humility.—  
'Tis but a few days since that men did call  
Me Tribune of Rome, and hung upon the  
Ruling of my lips (ay, from Tiber to  
Euphrates), as though I spake from Sinai.  
To-day I am proscribed ; upon my head  
A price is plac'd by the Count Palatine.—

In brief, I am a prisoner.

*Bish.*

But were

The ban of Holy Church remov'd——

*Rien.*

Say that

The Church, my Father, cancell'd her curse, and  
I became as brand pluck'd from the burning,  
Dost think the faithless hearts of perjur'd men  
Would turn to me again ? Thou knowest well  
The Romans.

*Bish.*

I do believe, Rienzi,

An thou wert reconcil'd to Holy Church,  
All that thou hast lost thou might'st reconquer.

*Rien.* And to this end couldst thou, on whom I  
have

So coldly look'd, and whose kind fellowship  
Lightly I have priz'd—couldst thou, forgiving  
Such estrangement, heap burning coals upon  
My ingrate head ? O noble kindly soul !

*Bish.* Speak not of the past, but yet amend it.—

The Holy Father, desiring not for  
Any man perdition, and swift to  
Mercy for the penitent, e'en now may  
Be pleas'd. His Holiness knows full well  
That at thy setting, all horrid shapes, that  
Are of anarchy and strife begotten,  
Will in their poisonous grasp stifle this  
Harass'd City as of yore. Rienzi !  
Were full reparation made, to tell

Thee I am charg'd, that neither men nor gold  
Shall be lacking for thy needs. Be swift then,  
My son, to reconcile thyself ; draw nigh  
At once to Avignon through me.

*Rien.* Dost thou  
In truth speak thus, good Bishop? By Cæsar!  
'Twere worth trial. Yet, Father, at what price?

*Bish.* Humility, my son. All to regain  
That thou hast lost, that sum were small. To win  
Back to Himself mankind, the Highest did  
Become the lowest! Learn from the Highest,  
Then. Refrain thy soul and bend, confessing  
Thee to be the vassal of the Pope, and  
Holding Rome in fief from Avignon.

*Rien.* It  
Cannot be that thou wouldst have me sell my  
Soul to purchase even this, the chiefest  
Place of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou  
Canst not think, although calamities rain  
Thick and swift upon my head, I could do  
This. And yet, my good Father, whereunto  
Doth tend thine argument?

*Bish.* A Servant of  
The Church I am, Rienzi, nor barter  
Ignominious (whereto, methinks, thou  
Hast too hotly stretch'd my counsel) do I  
Dictate. Yet if to thy thought it seem'd that  
I some trafficking abhorrent to thy

Nature prompted, think that I, standing on  
The shore, view Rome and all her fortunes borne  
Upon the one whole Ship in all the world,  
And she in peril imminent—extreme !

*Rien.* I know my power gone, the people  
Fallen off, the Holy Father's curse heap'd  
Upon my head ; yet, Bishop, do I know  
That the echo of my name hath leap'd to  
Uttermost horizons ! I have drunk of  
Pow'r. Rome and Rienzi, like moon and stars,  
Have shone together, making one light. This  
To me hath been and doth abide a joy  
Surpassing all of bliss that can be known,  
Imperishable, intense.—Tribune of  
Rome ! deliverer of Romans, of free  
Men freely chosen ! and shall I now some  
Gilded slavery put on, soiling my  
Untarnish'd soul by perjury, myself  
Confessing hireling of Avignon ?—  
By Heav'n ! I swear I would that glorious  
Past blot out ! Rather a thousand times I  
Would have lived and died a lowly swineherd !

*Bish.* I would that thou hadst spoken otherwise,  
Rienzi. I have sought to build a bridge  
For thee, whereby thou, bleeding (wounded to  
The death, I fear't), safety might'st have found. Thou  
Dost reject my labour. Nay, 'tis the lot  
Of many peacemakers. Seems I may not

*Bish.* I speak to

The regenerate, for so thou shalt be  
Shortly, casting from off thee this film that  
Blurs the true Rienzi. Further, my Son,  
I may not tarry. Ere that thou dost depart  
Without these walls, I yet may serve thee. 'Tis  
Best that I should go. Though not powerful,  
I am not powerless. Betide what may,  
Rienzi, my Son to be again! Thou  
Hope of Rome! To me for ever Tribune!  
Fare thee well! [Exit Bishop.

*Rien.* Farewell! thou simple, noble  
Heart. How pure and gentle is the light a  
Soul like thine can pour upon the darksome  
Lives of wrangling men! Ho! who waits without?

*Enter an Attendant.*

Good fellow, let thy mistress know I come.

[Exit Attendant.

(*At the open window at back*) O People that were mine,  
whose hearts did

Spring to mine, e'en as the waves leap to the  
Sunlight! O race of giants once, to mere  
Pigmies shrunken now! in your cold breasts the  
Spark of liberty hath died, even as  
The colours fade from off the rainbow. With  
Your own fingers ye have writ your doom!



*Enter* TRISTAN.

*Tris.* Sir,  
The City rouses. Thou shouldst be forth. The  
Moon is down.

*Rien.* What hour now, good Tristan?

*Tris.* It  
Lacks but an hour of dawn. Already there  
Is stir.

*Rien.* I am right loth to go. I feel  
My soul fast rooted yet in Rome.

*Tris.* Thou must  
Not longer tarry. Thy friends await thy  
Coming.

*Rien.* 'Tis true I have yet friends. God be  
Praised! O Rome, my Rome! my very heart's blood.  
Bone of my bone; flesh of my flesh, farewell.

*Tris.* This is the moment, my Tribune; haste!

*Rien.* Come!

[*Exeunt hurriedly.*]

SCENE VIII.—*The Gate Salara. Within the city.*

*Enter* Citizens.

*1st Cit.* Thou stirr'st betimes, my friend; what news?

*2nd Cit.* Rome is  
In danger, Sir.

*1st Cit.* That hath she been, Sir, time  
Out of mind—ever since she did first put  
On her swaddling-clothes.

*2nd Cit.* Nay, Sir, but things are  
At the worst.

*1st Cit.* Things, then, should mend. 'Tis adage  
Trite as matin-chimes.

*2nd Cit.* Rienzi the cause  
Hath been of all our troubles.

*1st Cit.* Let Pepin  
Sever the knot.

*2nd Cit.* Pepin! He will not move.  
Let's save ourselves. [*They go up.*]

*Enter Water-carriers, Herdsmen, and others.*

*Bep.* Bestir, Paolo! the  
Stars withdraw themselves; 'twere time we pass'd the  
Gate.

*Pao.* The gate is block'd.

*Enter FORTIFIOCCA and others.*

*For.* Good morrow, friends; but  
Ye be early afoot.

*1st Cit.* Thy fashion  
Likewise, Messer.

*For.* The thief and cut-throat be  
Abroad, Sir. In these lawless times he that  
Values life or cash must take scant rest. Such

Empty legacy our worthy Tribune  
Left us.

*1st Cit.* Ay, truly, Sir. Yet wherefore is  
The right to pass without the City walls  
Denied?

*For.* 'Tis not barr'd, methinks, to such as  
Thou. But there be enemies abroad, and  
Those that wish our City's welfare do charge  
Themselves to hunt those out.

*2nd Cit.* 'Tis good, Messer.  
To render Rome such service, thou dost well.

*For.* Come, Sirs, with me. Ye shall not find the guard  
Too stubborn.

[*They go towards the gate, likewise PAOLO and  
BEPPO.*]

*Enter, at the back of the stage, GIULIO and ROSA,  
cloaked.*

*Giu.* 'Tis as I told thee, Lippo.  
Fortifiocca hath, I know not how, smelt  
Out our plans.

*Rosa.* Then likewise his are patent ;  
So are we forearm'd.

*Giu. (looking round).* These fellows, also  
Forearm'd to our detriment, I fear ! See !  
He doth approach.

[*The great bell of the Capitol is heard in the  
distance.*]

*Enter FORTIFIocca.*

*A Cit.* Hearken, friends, to that sound !—  
It bodes no good !

*For. (advancing).* That iron tongue I can  
Interpret, fellow-citizens. It doth  
Warn the Romans to take heed lest one they  
Hate escape. Rienzi flies !

*Some of the Citizens.* Rienzi  
Flies ? Death to the traitor !

*For.* Fear it not,  
My fellow-citizens. There's no escape.  
Each gate is guarded. He is in your hands.  
*Giu. (advancing).* Art thou so sure of it, thou  
wretch ? What dost  
Thou on two legs, thou viper !

*For.* How, braggart ?  
Hast thou the face of brass !—

*Giu.* Ay, and the hand  
Of steel, Sir ! [*Touches his sword.*]

*For.* Mark, Citizens, well this man.  
He is the Tyrant's other self. Seize him !

*Cec.* Hold, Fortifiocca ! If thou speak'st thus,  
Thou dost not Giulio Lulli know. If  
To have fought upon the side that's in the  
Shade to-day, then being in the blaze of  
Full-flush'd triumph treachery be, then thou  
And, for that matter, all of us—ay, all—

Are traitors.

*Citizens.* Well said, Cecco Alesso !

*Giu.* I thank thee, Cecco. As for this fellow,  
A traitor should be judge of treachery.  
Whom hath this fellow served and not betray'd ?  
To beguile, deceive, forsake, and to change  
His colours more often than yon lizard,  
Are for him easy as for ye to love,  
Or to nobly bear yourselves. Yet this man  
Stands up among ye on two feet !

*For.* Silence,

Thou wordy rogue, fit satellite of thy  
Master ! Dost think to silence with thy tongue  
The bell that cries out for judgment on thy  
Chief ? Down with him, Citizens ! Be sure he  
Probes the ground for your arch-enemy.

[GIULIO LULLI attacks FORTIFIocca. *They*  
*fight. The crowd divides—some crying*  
*“Giulio Lulli !” some “Fortifiocca !”*

*Enter a procession of Pilgrims, headed by BISHOP*  
*RAYMOND, who interposes between the combatants*  
*with a Cross.*

*Bish.* I

Pray ye, Sirs, to let these Pilgrims pass.

[FORTIFIocca and GIULIO drop their sword-  
*points, and the crowd makes way.*

What !

*Cec.* Reverend Bishop, 'tis thus decreed that

None disguis'd, or cloak'd, or veil'd—nay, Holy  
Father, not Cardinals themselves—may pass  
Without the City gates.

*Bish.* None here I know  
That have the right to give the law to those  
That serve the Church. Your warrant !

*For.* One past all  
Argument. Self-preservation ! 'Tis  
Th' instinct of States as 'tis of men, and  
Self-defence the law supreme of both.

*Giu. (stepping forth).* Then  
Stand upon thine own defence. [*Draws.*

*Bishop.* Nay ! fall back,  
My son. No blood shall flow whilst I stand by.

*Giu.* Yet must some way be found ! The Pilgrims  
shall

Go forth. What ! Rosa, Sacchi, Cecco. All  
Ye do know our Reverend Father here,  
True, tried, and faithful or in sun or shade.  
He now needs help. It is his wish, I say,  
That, being of his flock, these Pilgrims pass.  
Open, then, a road, and hew that traitor  
Down !

[*CECCO and others wave off GIULIO, ROSA, and  
SACCHI.*

*Cec.* It cannot be, Giulio. Stand off !  
We know not who these Pilgrims be. But this  
I say. Let the good Bishop whom we trust,

Upon his crozier swear that none have  
Donn'd the pilgrims' garb but godly men and  
Penitents.

*For.* Yea ! let the Bishop further  
Swear that Cola Rienzi doth not hide  
His shameless head beneath the pilgrim's cowl.

*Bish.* Be still, nor lift your voices further. Hear  
Me, Fortifiocca ; thou likewise, Cecco.  
Nor oaths nor solemn conjurations  
Look to demand of me, that am of your  
Souls Bishop and pastor, and set above  
Ye all. These Pilgrims whom to let and  
Hinder ye have dar'd are mine own children,  
Advance upon them, or with hostile touch  
Lay finger on the meanest of them, and  
I upon your heads invoke the curse of  
Th' Omnipotent !

*For.* See, then, thy hands be clean.  
What pow'r to launch the bolts of Holy Rome  
Have Priests that tampering with their trust, do  
Dare to shield one excommunicate ?

*[Retires to back of the stage.]*

*Bish.* Dost  
Thou thus read this matter !

*Enter hurriedly CERRONI, MARCO, TRISTAN, and a  
band of armed Citizens. CERRONI advances to  
the Bishop. FORTIFIocca has retired to the back  
CERRONI does not see him.*



*Some of the Citizens.* Cerroni !

*Cecco.* How !

Escap'd from Pepin's dungeons ?

*Cer.* Ay ! and

In hot haste to seek a traitor out.

*Cec.* Then

Timely art thou come, for we have cause to

Think the traitor hides him here, and in the

Sheep's clothing of a pilgrim's gown.—

*Bish. (to CERRONI).* Beware !

*Cer.* Nay, 'tis scarce possible. (*Runs down the Pilgrims' ranks, and halting before one gives a start, but passes on.*) He is not there.

I find not there the man I seek.

[*As he returns he comes suddenly upon FORTI-FIOCCA.*

*For.* Whom seek'st

Thou ?

*Cer.* Thou art the man ! The traitor trebly  
Perjur'd and forsworn. Thou that hast these ten  
Years past brew'd all the treacheries that have  
Our State besmirc'h'd ! (*CECCO here attempts to inter-*  
*vene.*) Hinder me not, Cecco !

This is 'twixt myself and him alone.

*Many of the Citizens hold back* CECCO ALESSO *and*  
*cry—* Let

Be, Alesso. 'Tis our own Cerroni.

[*The press of Citizens increases, and in the com-*

*motion the Pilgrims, together with the Bishop  
are forced to the back of the stage.*

*For.* Liar, let that disprove thy slander !

[*Strikes CERRONI. FORTIFIocca and CERRONI  
draw their swords and fight. FORTIFIocca  
falls.*

*Cer.*

So

Fate hath come up with thee at length.

*For.*

And it

Shall o'ertake thee soon, thou hireling knave !

Look to the Pilgrims, Cecco ! Sacchi ! some

Of ye. See they elude ye not.—Avenge

[*He tries to rise, but falls back.*

Me, friends, upon this stealthy hired knave.—

Out upon thee, fell assassin !

[*Dies.*

*Giu.*

I did

Think this man was doom'd to perish by my

Hand. I grudge his death to thee, Cerroni.

*Cer.* Thy sword is sharper for that loss, my friend.—

Go, some of ye, remove that sorry corpse.

[*FORTIFIocca's body is borne forth.*

Rome hath one burden less to bear, being

Rid of Fortifiocca. Ye did ill, friends,

With such a mass of treacheries, to

Palter. He would have bound ye hand and foot

To Pepin.

*Cec.*

Cerroni, we be men, we

Romans, easy to lead, so ye speak fair.

Thou hast th' ordering of us now. We know  
Thee capable and strong and honest. What  
Should we do ?

*Cer.* Then will I speak ye fair, good  
Cecco. Stay not the Pilgrims. Yea, speed them.

*Cec.* Room there for the Pilgrims ! Room, I say !

*[The People open out.]*

*(The sun is now rising.)*

*Re-enter the Pilgrims, with* BISHOP RAYMOND.

*Cer.*

Most

Reverend Father, none hinder now thy  
Peaceful flock. For them and thee no gate has  
Locks. Clear there the Gate !

*Bish. (to CERRONI).* For this kind deed to  
Harmless Pilgrims done, great guerdon shalt thou  
Have. Thy name shall in their orisons find  
Place among those names they hold the dearest.  
The Saints themselves shall smile upon this act.  
*(To the Pilgrims)* Ye have heard, my Children, ye are  
free to

Pass. Take up your pilgrims' staves. Go in peace !

*[As the Pilgrims move, a Voice from the ranks :*

*"Farewell, Cerroni ! Farewell, Cerroni !"*

*The Pilgrims move forward, accompanied  
by GIULIO, MARCO, TRISTAN, and ROSA,  
and followed by CECCO ALESSO and all the*

Citizens ; *last of all, by the Bishop. As the Pilgrims move from the stage they chaunt the verse :—*

“ All earthly things are disappearing :

The world its course well-nigh hath trod ;

We Pilgrims, too, are hourly nearing

Our home—the Paradise of God ! ”

- [CERRONI *remains alone upon the stage, and as the strains of the hymn die away, the curtain falls.*

FINIS.







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